Vancouver metro

Your essential daily news | WEEKEND, DECEMBER 9-11, 2016 | High 1°C/Low -1°C Snow!

NATALIE PORTMAN
O that's Jackie all right
metroLIFE

EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES

Province to immediately open six consumption sites to combat fentanyl crisis

metroNEWS

DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

B.C. told to report on missing women

INQUIRY

Key aspects of 2014 report not implemented: Auditor General

Matt Kieltyka
Metro | Vancouver

Some of the key recommendations from British Columbia's missing women inquiry remain outstanding, according to a review from Auditor General Carol Bellringer.

While Bellringer credits government for fulfilling some recommendations from commissioner Wally Oppal's 2012 final report — like a compensation fund for children of missing women, a new Missing Persons Act, and funding for organizations helping sex trade workers — she said government stopped publicly reporting on its progress implementing recommendations in 2014 even though many have yet to be completed.

The audit makes a single recommendation: For government to continue to report publicly on its progress.

"There was an indication (government felt the progress was significant enough not to have that kind of a report. We would suggest otherwise," Bellringer said on Thursday. "There is still a significant amount of work to be done. A return to regular public reporting would set the foundation for meaningful engagement and collaboration between government and stakeholders."

Some of the most important recommendations that still haven't been implemented include ongoing support for family members of missing women and measures to help women involved in sex work feel safe reporting violence to police.

The Missing Women Commission of Inquiry was established in 2010 to look into the police investigations of 67 women who disappeared from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and the decision to stay an attempted murder charge against convicted serial killer Robert Pickton in 1998.

Attorney General Suzanne Anton said government will follow through on Bellringer's recommendation and expects to province to release a new report on its progress in late 2017.

"We hear the audit's recommendation to report annually on our progress to date and will be implementing the recommendation," she said.

Anton said reporting stopped in 2014 because the most comprehensive and immediate recommendations had been addressed by then and the remaining work was more general and piecemeal.

"There are things you can put a check mark beside and say 'yes, that's done,'" said Anton. "There are things that will be completed and there are things that will always be part of our work as government."

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metro NEWS
Your essential daily news
Pantone Color Institute's colour of the year for 2017 is "greenery."

'I feel like Canada is my country'

SETTLEMENT

Syrian refugee has not looked back since arriving here

Wanyee Li
Metro | Vancouver

Abdurrahman Said, centre, with his father, Wahid, and his sister Reza at their Coquitlam home. Said dreams of attending university in Canada and having his brother, who is still overseas, reunite with his family. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO

Twenty-four year old Abdurrhman Said is one of 2,100 Syrians who came to B.C. after the Canadian government promised to accept 25,000 refugees from war-torn Syria.

Said arrived in Toronto on Feb. 19, 2016, with his parents and his brother and sister. They spent two days there before government workers told them the news — they were going to Vancouver.

It was love at first sight, he said.

"Before I came to here, I didn't have ID. We were refugees," Said told Metro.

"Here in Canada, everyone, even when I show them my ID, they don't think I am a refugee. They think I am an immigrant."

Ten months later, Said and his family live in a three-bedroom apartment in Coquitlam. It is a far cry from Aleppo, Syria, where he witnessed his neighbourhood school being bombed to the ground. He is taking full-time English classes in hopes he can one day attend university to continue his engineering studies.

Said, who studied electrical engineering in Turkey, says he is dedicated to giving back to the country that took him in when no one else would.

"I said to myself, we will be good here. We will be good to Canada and we have to work and work and work more because this country accepted us and we have to learn what we can do here."

These days, he spends his free time looking for work — something related to electrical engineering, he said — and filling out an application to have his brother, Yaman, the only family member still overseas, transferred to Canada. Yaman is currently receiving dialysis treatment for kidney failure in Germany.

"My dream is to go to university and my dream is to have my brother come here to Canada to share our country. I feel like Canada is my country."

He knows there are some who don't agree with the government's decision to take in Syrian refugees, but is optimistic they will change their minds.

"Maybe there are a few people who don't want us, but they don't know us."

He says the vast majority of Vancouverites he has met have welcomed him, embraced the things his family celebrates, and helped him navigate the city.

Some counsellors from THE Immigrant Services Society of B.C. even joined his family in Coquitlam to celebrate the end of Ramadan, a Muslim holiday, he said.

"They don't even know what Ramadan is and they treated us like we are from this community," he said.

"At Christmas, I will celebrate because everyone here is my family. I feel that."

BY THE NUMBERS

25,000
Number of Syrian refugees Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announces, in Nov. 2015 that Canada will accept.

2,100
Number of refugees who have settled in B.C.

299
Number of refugees slated to come to B.C. before the end of the year.

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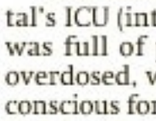
HUDSON'S BAY

Safe consumption sites fight B.C. overdose crisis

DRUGS

622 fatal ODs in province from January to October



Jen St. Denis
Metro | Vancouver

"We need to bring the death toll down. We need to bring down the number of people with brain damage."

That was the stark assessment of British Columbia's ongoing drug overdose crisis from Dr. Perry Kendall, B.C.'s provincial health officer. The addition of the synthetic opioid fentanyl to drugs like heroin has already contributed to a spike in overdose deaths: between January and October 2016, 622 people died from overdoses in B.C.

That number will certainly rise when the B.C. coroner reports November numbers, said Kendall.

"They are higher than anything we've seen before," Kendall said. The appearance of carfentanil, a much more potent form of fentanyl, is likely a factor in the increase.

"Last week St. Paul's Hospital's ICU (intensive care unit) was full of people who had overdosed, who had been unconscious for so long that they had brain damage," he said. "We have to stop that."

B.C.'s Ministry of Health and health authorities in Vancouver, Surrey and Victoria are taking the extraordinary step of opening what the ministry has termed six "overdose prevention sites" in those three cities. Kendall insisted the sites are not supervised injection sites, which are currently very difficult to open because of a strict federal law brought in by the former Conservative government, a law the B.C. government and Vancouver Coastal Health are lobbying the government to change. Only two legal supervised injection sites currently operate in Canada, both in Vancouver.

A man prepares heroin he bought on the street to be injected at the Insite safe injection clinic in Vancouver, B.C., on Wednesday May 11, 2011. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

"A supervised consumption site is a place that's specifically designed for people to come in, have their injection monitored under supervision, to receive training on safe injections, to be assessed for any health problems that they have, and to be linked with health care," Kendall said.

> **We need to bring the death toll down.**
> Dr. Perry Kendall

In Vancouver, the three overdose prevention sites are located at the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU) at 380 East Hastings St., Portland Hotel Society's Washington Needle Depot at 177 East Hastings and the Drug Resource Centre, also operated by Portland Hotel Society. At the sites, drug users will be able to use their drug, inside and within view of people trained to administer naloxone, an overdose-reversing drug.

The province did not ask permission first from the federal government, but Terry Lake, B.C.'s health minister, met with federal health minister Jane Philpott following the announcement of the new program this morning, Kendall said. A legal opinion suggested the sites do not contravene the federal legislation.

Frustrated with the slow response to an overwhelming crisis, volunteers have been operating pop-up injection sites in the Downtown Eastside and briefly in Surrey, another overdose hotspot. Dr. Patricia Daly, chief medical officer for Vancouver Coastal Health, said she hoped the new sites will mean there is "no longer a need for these pop-up tents."

"We support them in providing first aid and ask that they'd work with us to steer clients to InSite (a safe injection site in the Downtown Eastside) and other services that we offer," Daly said.

"I understand why they popped up, because despite the work we've done to date we've seen deaths rise."

Vancouver Coastal Health also plans to install B.C.'s Mobile Medical Health Unit, a modular building that was used during the Olympics, at 58 W. Hastings St. The city-owned vacant lot was the site of a tent city from July to November. The unit will act as a satellite emergency department of St. Paul's Hospital, Daly said, where medical staff will connect people with addiction treatments such as suboxone.

YOUNG IMMIGRANTS

'Unsung heroes' lauded

David P. Ball
Metro | Vancouver

Immigrant and refugee youth from across the province may not make the front page often, but an awards ceremony this week hoped to raise the profile of these "unsung heroes," according to the group Fresh Voices.

Out of roughly 80 nominees, eight young people received leadership awards Monday night from the initiative, which was launched by the B.C. Representative for Children and Youth and the Vancouver Foundation.

"The Fresh Voices awards are not about academic excellence or straight A's," explained the Vancouver Foundation's Vi Nguyen in a phone interview. "Fresh Voices really wanted to highlight unsung heroes, leaders leading the revolution who wouldn't otherwise be recognized."

In addition to the awards, Fresh Voices holds its forum annually to bring young people and policy-makers together, this year bringing 180 young people into one space to explain their proposals and struggles to government officials, including the province's assistant deputy minister of education.

One keynote speaker was Tima Kurdi — the Coquitlam, B.C., aunt of Syrian toddler Alan Kurdi, whose death in the Mediterranean in 2015 ignited a worldwide outcry over refugees.

"Tima's story resonated with many people there, but particularly with the Syrian refugees in the room."

Fresh Voices' aim, according to the initiative's website, is to "offer a way for immigrant and refugee youth … to engage in dialogue and action to identify and remove barriers to their success."

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VANCOUVERING

Vancouver's first Idle No More rally outside the Vancouver Art Gallery on Dec. 10, 2012.. CARA MCKENNA/FOR METRO

The 4-year evolution of Idle no More

Organizer says movement was awakening for indigenous youth as environmental battle escalates

INDIGENOUS STORIES

Cara McKenna
For Metro

Four years ago this weekend, two students at Native Education College led Vancouver's first Idle No More rally.

The event on Dec. 10, 2012, was part of a national day of action for the Idle No More movement, which was brand new at the time and founded by four women in Saskatchewan.

That day, Nipawi Mahihkan Misit (Steven) Kakinoosit and Danita Nez gathered about 100 people to march from their school to the Vancouver Art Gallery.

They knew it was the start of something big; but had no idea at the time just how massive it would become.

"Idle No More really started out as rallies and round dances and information sessions," Kakinoosit reflects now.

"Now you're starting to see people getting more and more involved in direct actions. I feel like that's where Idle No More really ended up going.

"It's always been the goal of the people who were organizing with Idle No More to make it part of a bigger struggle."

Idle No More was initially a rebellion against former prime minister Stephen Harper and his government's environmentally controversial Bill C-45.

It quickly became one of the largest indigenous movements in Canadian history, and marked the first of many uprisings around protecting land and water since: Burnaby Mountain, Unist'ot'en camp and the Elsipogtog blockade, to name a few.

Kakinoosit, who has participated in numerous actions since Idle No More, said even though the movement's major goal was accomplished, there have been unexpected turns, such as the recent approval of the Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion.

"I expected things to look a bit different (today)," he said.

"We did accomplish the goal of getting Harper out, which was really great; it took quite a long time. When it came to the whole 'anyone but Harper' thing, we're paying for that now."

He also pointed out recent events in the United States such as Standing Rock and the election of Donald Trump, and the feeling of a bigger revolution brewing.

"All of this is really tying into something that's hard to describe," he said.

"It's just right around the corner, something big is coming and we all have to prepare."

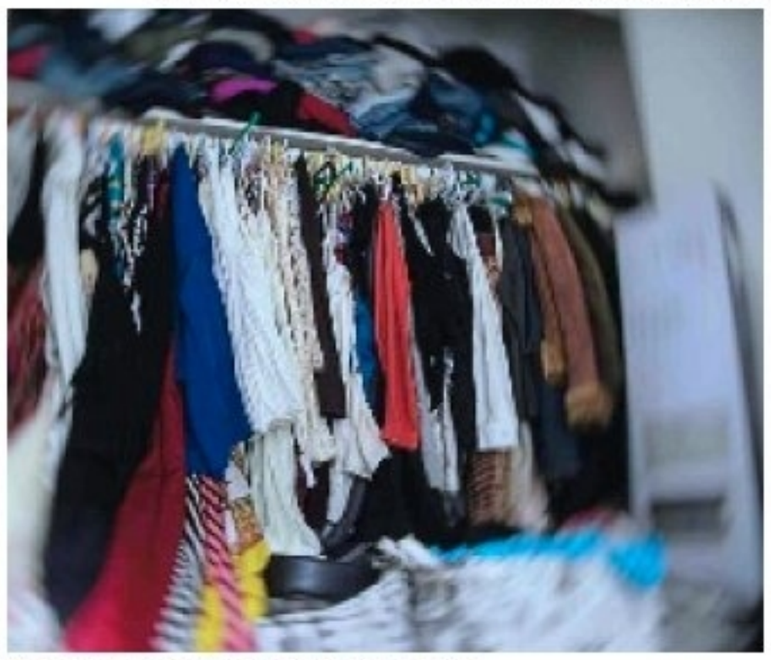
For Kakinoosit, one of many Idle No More organizers across Canada, he is grateful for what the movement now represents: an awakening.

"I honestly feel Idle No More did what it set out to accomplish and that was to inform that masses and wake up Indigenous youth," Kakinoosit reflects.

"That wasn't to say there weren't people that laid the groundwork for us. But for our generation that's what did it."

> **I honestly feel Idle No More did what it set out to accomplish**
> Nipawi Mahihkan Misit (Steven) Kakinoosit

with icons by **Danielle Vallée** from the noun project



Behold: Suzy's vertigo-inducing closet.
GRAEME MCRANOR/FOR METRO

If three's a crowd, then what's my life?

THE BIG SQUEEZE

Graeme McRanor
For Metro

We're having a baby, and we've got to make room for it.

The female body adapts, naturally: the belly expands to accommodate the growing fetus and, internally, organs are designed to get shifty.

First, the bladder and small intestines become squished; by mid-pregnancy, the stomach has swung upwards nearly 45 degrees — like one of those old garage doors, the rigid ones without hinged rows. By the third trimester, said door is pressing up against the liver and lungs.

If only our apartments in cost-prohibitive Vancouver were so flexible.

After much discussion, we've decided to compress Suzy and unborn baby (due next month) into the laneway house with me and my son, where we'll step on one another's toes for a little more than a year (maternity leave pays what?) until she goes back to work and we can afford a bigger apartment.

So in a nutshell: Four humans, one bedroom, for more than a year.

Perfect solution? Not even close.

But doable. And we'll all be together. Like, really together.

No doubt, there will be congestion.

Organization is paramount. Thankfully, my little house has plenty of hidden dead space that can double as storage for a good portion of Suzy's more manageable assets. And we can rent a storage locker for her bed, couch and her godforsaken metal trunk, a sentimental family piece that, give or take, weighs as much as a small car.

Then there's her current apartment's bedroom closet, which looks like a vintage clothing store that's been wracked by tornado.

"What will you do with all this stuff?" I asked.

"Don't worry, I've got a closet organizer."

I indicated an unopened box leaning against the closet door. "Is that it?"

Fortunately, I have two deep, double-door closets in my bedroom that, until now, have functioned perfectly as a his-and-his: my limited wardrobe in one, son London's clothes and assorted toys in the other.

I'm happy to share; London isn't so keen.

But we'll adapt.

Organs aside, I'm not so sure about Suzy.

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Directions

1. In a medium saucepan, heat the cream over medium heat to a gentle simmer. Remove from heat and add chopped chocolate. Swirl the cream so that the chocolate is covered. Allow to sit for 2 minutes.
2. Gently whisk until smooth, serve immediately.
3. Set out a large variety of treats to dip into the chocolate.

Tip: Use any fruits or baked goods of your choice. We suggest berries, bananas, melons, oranges, pineapple, croissants and sliced pound cake.

save on foods

VANCOUVERING

with icons by **Danielle Vallée** from the noun project

FOOD NOTES AER BRINGS MODERN COZY TO HASTINGS

Abby Wiseman
For Metro | Vancouver

Hastings Sunrise has been lauded as the next hot hood and the proof is in the caffeine: multiple high-end coffee shops are opening, Aer Cafe being the newest.

Located at 2263 E. Hastings St., Aer is modern and airy with white walls, light wood and metal furnishings. The space feels small and cozy, but there are more seats than expected.

Aer's chocolate cookie did not skimp on chocolate and was firm on the outside, while maintaining a gooey centre. (I only wished I had asked them to warm it to make the chocolate ooze.) Paired with the perfectly frothed cappuccino ($3.50), I was in coffee-shop heaven.

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A man takes part in a mindful meditation session.
CONTRIBUTED

Get your mind right

VANCOUVER TRENDING

Amy Logan
For Metro | Vancouver

Inside a tucked-away Gastown studio, white walls are patterned with sunlight, the sweet-sharp scent of eucalyptus drifts through the room, and a profound sense of calm is settling in. Eyes closed, a group of practitioners form a circle. Their breath is measured and slow.

This is mindful meditation, and from school kids to corporate executives, it's a practice that's catching on in Vancouver. Mindfulness, a connection to and awareness of the present moment, offers an antidote to today's fast-paced, tech-saturated world, a chance to appreciate being alive.

Anita Cheung, Moment Meditation's effervescent co-founder and brand-experience director, came to meditation through her own mental health struggle in her early 20s. A counsellor taught her the practice of mindfulness to help her cope with stress and depression. "I learned to get to know myself by sitting with myself," she said.

For the past few years, recognizing the benefits of mindfulness in her own life and wanting to spread awareness, she has introduced pop-up meditation studios as a "passion project." Situated in front of the Vancouver Art Gallery just before Christmas last year, she generated a lot of interest with a mobile studio housed in an airstream trailer.

It also netted the attention of Hiroko Demichelis and Evian McMillan, both avid mindfulness practitioners with their own areas of expertise. Soon, Moment was born. They offer classes tailored to reduce stress, improve focus and boost mood for individuals, companies and classrooms. They also have the technology to measure MQ, or Mindfulness Quotient, quantifying meditation's ability to lower stress by testing muscle tension and electrical activity in the brain.

In Vancouver public schools, MindUP, a curriculum used to teach mindfulness to pre-elementary to Grade 8 students, has been widely lauded for its positive results in teaching kids ways to cope with stress from an early age

Shambhala has been introducing Vancouverites to mindfulness-awareness for over 30 years, offering a by-donation weekly open house as well as various classes, meditation practices, and training. Mindful Living offers individual counselling, mindfulness group programs, and workplace programs.

As for Moment Meditation, its founders hope to have studios in 40 locations by 2020.

Cheung said that people are afraid to try mediation because they think they're doing it wrong. But modern forms of mindfulness aim to take meditation to the masses, making it accessible to all.

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QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK FERRIS WHEEL LIGHTS UP BLOEDEL CONSERVATORY The new addition sits atop Little Mountain in Mount Pleasant. It costs $15 for a family of four to take a ride, while Van Dusen Garden's Festival of Lights attendees ride free. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO

Privatizing ports a misstep: CEO

TRANSPORTATION

Executive concerned over 'radical' idea

Stu Neatby
For Metro | Vancouver

The Port of Vancouver's CEO is unconvinced of the need for a federal examination into the privatization of Canadian ports.

Robin Silvester, speaking to members of the Vancouver Board of Trade Thursday, was responding to the federal government's recent hiring of Morgan Stanley. The financial services firm will provide advice to the Transport Ministry on many transportation issues, including the possible privatization of Canadian ports.

"I'll be straight-forward, I see it as more of a threat. What is the problem that the government is trying to solve?" said Silvester, responding to a question from a member of the audience.

Silvester pointed to the make-up of the board of the Port of Vancouver as a successful model of governance. He said that this arms length model has allowed the port to facilitate trade, while also listening to the concerns of Lower Mainland communities and protecting the environment.

The Port of Vancouver's board is composed of seven representatives selected by industry, and four appointed by democratically-elected levels of government — one each from the Lower Mainland municipalities, the province, the federal government, and the prairie provinces.

"I don't see this as being a key problem from the point of view of port governance that needs such a radical solution," he said.

Robin Silvester
STU NEATBY/FOR METRO

> **What is the problem that the government is trying to solve?**
> Robin Silvester, CEO, Port of Vancouver

The hiring of Morgan Stanley was announced in mid-November by Transport Canada following an independent review of Canada's transportation network carried out by former cabinet minister David Emerson.

The review contained 60 recommendations including "examining the feasibility and viability of adopting a share-capital structure for Canada Port Authorities."

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Biden urges Trudeau to be stalwart in new world

U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden called on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to be a defender of the international "rules of the road" to help shepherd the world through a period of deep uncertainty.

Biden delivered that message in a stirring speech at a state dinner in his honour in Ottawa on Thursday night, in which he singled out the fight against climate change as the most important issue of this generation.

Biden didn't mention president-elect Donald Trump by name but he made veiled references to the uncertainty gripping Europe and the United States since Britain's decision to leave the European Union and the recent presidential election in his own country.

Biden said the world would make enormous progress — but only if leaders such Trudeau and German Chancellor Angela Merkel stepped up.

"The changes that are going to take place are going to be astronomical," Biden said.

"The progress is going to be made but it's going to take men like you, Mr. Prime Minister, who understand it has to fit within the context of a liberal economic order, a liberal international order, where there's basic rules of the road."

Biden praised Canada as an ally and a friend, one that the U.S. needs more than ever. He singled out the joint fight against Islamic militants in Syria and Iraq, bolstering Eastern European allies against Russia and combating climate change.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Justin Trudeau and Joe Biden arrive at a state dinner on Thursday in Ottawa.
JUSTIN TANG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Minister of Finance Bill Morneau and Wanda Robson, sister of Viola Desmond. Desmond was named as the first woman to be on a Canadian banknote. ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Desmond to grace $10 bill

MONEY

Activist defied the rules and sat in 'whites-only' section

It had been some time since Viola Desmond last visited the cinema.

The hairdresser and entrepreneur opted to sit close to the front of the theatre; her poor eyesight made it difficult to see from the balcony, the section where black people were expected to sit in those days.

"She wanted to see a movie," Wanda Robson, 89, said Thursday as she recalled the historic day in 1946 when her older sister chose to defy the rules and sit in the Nova Scotia theatre's "whites-only" section.

Given all that followed, Robson said, Desmond would have been honoured to see herself on the $10 bill — a tribute that will make its debut in 2018 when she becomes the first Canadian woman to be celebrated on the face of her country's currency.

"Viola Desmond's own story reminds all of us that big change can start with moment of dignity and bravery," Finance Minister Bill Morneau said as he unveiled the choice during a news conference in Gatineau, Que.

"She represents courage, strength and determination — qualities we should all aspire to every day."

Desmond is often described as the Canadian version of Rosa Parks, the U.S. civil rights hero who refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white passenger. But Desmond's act of defiance and subsequent arrest took place much earlier and in a much more spontaneous way than the historic 1955 events of Montgomery, Alabama.

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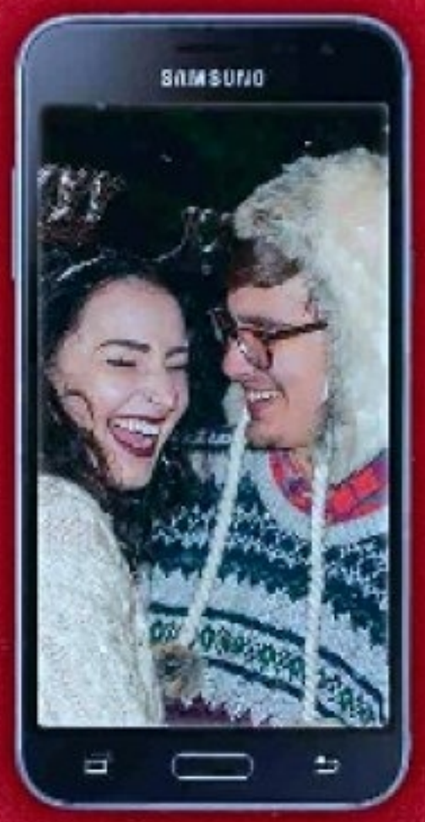

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Onus is on police to earn trust

Rosemary Westwood relocates from Canada to the U.S. She chronicles her observations in a weekly column for Metro.

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD
From the U.S.

Something seemed to have snapped.

By the time Louisiana Sheriff Newell Normand got behind the podium this week to announce manslaughter charges in the high-profile shooting death of football player Joe McKnight (formerly NFL, recently CFL), it appeared as if years of Black Lives Matter activism, the ensuing scrutiny of police and attacks against police, and the swampy tone of internet debate had combined to tip him over the edge.

It began as a typical news conference announcing that Ronald Gasser, a white man, had been charged with manslaughter three days after police let him go — even though Gasser had admitted to shooting McKnight, a black man, to death, in a road rage incident just outside New Orleans. But it quickly devolved into a polemic against internet trolling and criticisms of the force's investigation, existential dismay at the state of his community, and a plea to respect police and the justice process in Louisiana.

It was unusually instructive, too, on a far deeper level than who was charged with what, both for what Sheriff Normand said, and what he did not say. For a 44-minute microcosm of the colliding issues around race, the Internet and policing in this America, you couldn't do much better.

At times, Normand's fist pounded the podium, and he berated national and local critics of his investigation and of the elected officials who supported his police force. "Shame on you!" he said. He quoted at length, and without censoring, the vulgar, racist and anti-gay comments directed at those officials (MSNBC had to drop its live coverage). He said black men should be more afraid of "black-on-black" crime, not road rage. He said Louisiana's "stand your ground" laws, which permit lethal self-defence, made the case tricky, and was incredulous that black-rights activists like the NAACP were not content to trust his officers to do their job in investigating McKnight's death.

"It's not even really anymore about this case. It's about all the other cases that are yet to come," Normand said, getting it only half right. Uproar over police actions across this country is also about all the cases that came before.

"This isn't about race. Not a single witness has said, up to this day, that there was one racial slur uttered during the course of these events," Normand said, ignoring completely the kind of ingrained racism that breeds disproportionate fear and hatred and requires no explicit slurs in order to raise the risk of violence.

"We better reflect and look at ourselves in the mirror and decide: What are we going to be about in our community? Are we going to continue to tear ourselves apart?" he asked, apparently unable to see that policing in Louisiana isn't exactly a model of community outreach.

This state has the highest incarceration rate in the U.S. New Orleans has a chronically underfunded public defender's office. Normand's own police force has been criticized for jailing school kids — and black kids in particular — at the highest rate in the state. And black people, and black men and boys in particular, are overrepresented across the criminal system. Normand might not like it, but optics matter. He might not like it, but onus isn't on the people to trust police, it's on police to earn that trust. And the critics aren't going anywhere.

IN BRIEF

Pizza shop gunman regrets handling of incident

The man accused of firing an assault rifle inside a Washington restaurant said he regrets how he handled the situation but refused to completely dismiss the false online claims involving a child sex ring that brought him there.

"I just wanted to do some good and went about it the wrong way," Edgar Maddison Welch, who's been jailed since his Sunday arrest, told The New York Times in a Wednesday videoconference. Welch, 28, told the newspaper he started driving to Washington from his Salisbury, North Carolina, home intending only to give the Comet Ping Pong pizza restaurant a "closer look."

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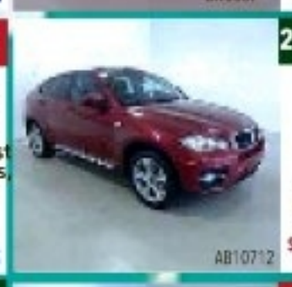
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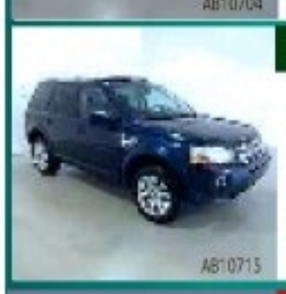
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Big banks are ripe for disruption

BANKING

Tech startups offer easier, cheaper ways to borrow, invest

It may not be much longer before bank branches join video-rental stores and record shops as relics of a bygone era.

Silicon Valley is pressuring banks to change their ways or risk becoming the latest industry overtaken by technology. Hundreds of financial technology, or "fintech," startups are offering easier and cheaper ways to save, borrow, spend and invest. They are doing it by shifting the battleground to smartphone apps and websites.

Banks appear to be tackling the fintech threat by closing branches, laying off workers, pouring money into their own technology departments and even buying or teaming up with fintech startups.

TAKING THREAT SERIOUSLY

A survey of the financial services industry by the research firm Gartner Inc. found that 70 per cent of respondents considered fintech startups to be a bigger threat than their traditional rivals. With their guard up, the much bigger banks are more likely to drive many of the fintech startups out of business if they don't acquire them first.

BIG, BOLD APPROACH

Robinhood, a stock brokerage, does not charge any commissions for its more than 1 million customers to buy and sell shares. To make money, it introduced a $10 monthly service that allows trading when the stock market is closed.

At Affirm, an online lender, CEO Max Levchin — a co-founder of PayPal — has raised $525 million to back Affirm's focus on consumers who do not like or cannot get credit cards. Affirm has developed its own formula to identify borrowers able to repay loans in equal installments. Affirm also refuses to charge fees for late payments.

A YOUNG MARKET

Fintech's target market so far has been the millennial generation, the 18- to 34-year-olds who typically have a deeper attachment to their smartphones than any bank.

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Vlad Tenev and Baiju Bhatt are co-founders of Robinhood, a stock brokerage that does not charge commissions for its customers to buy and sell shares. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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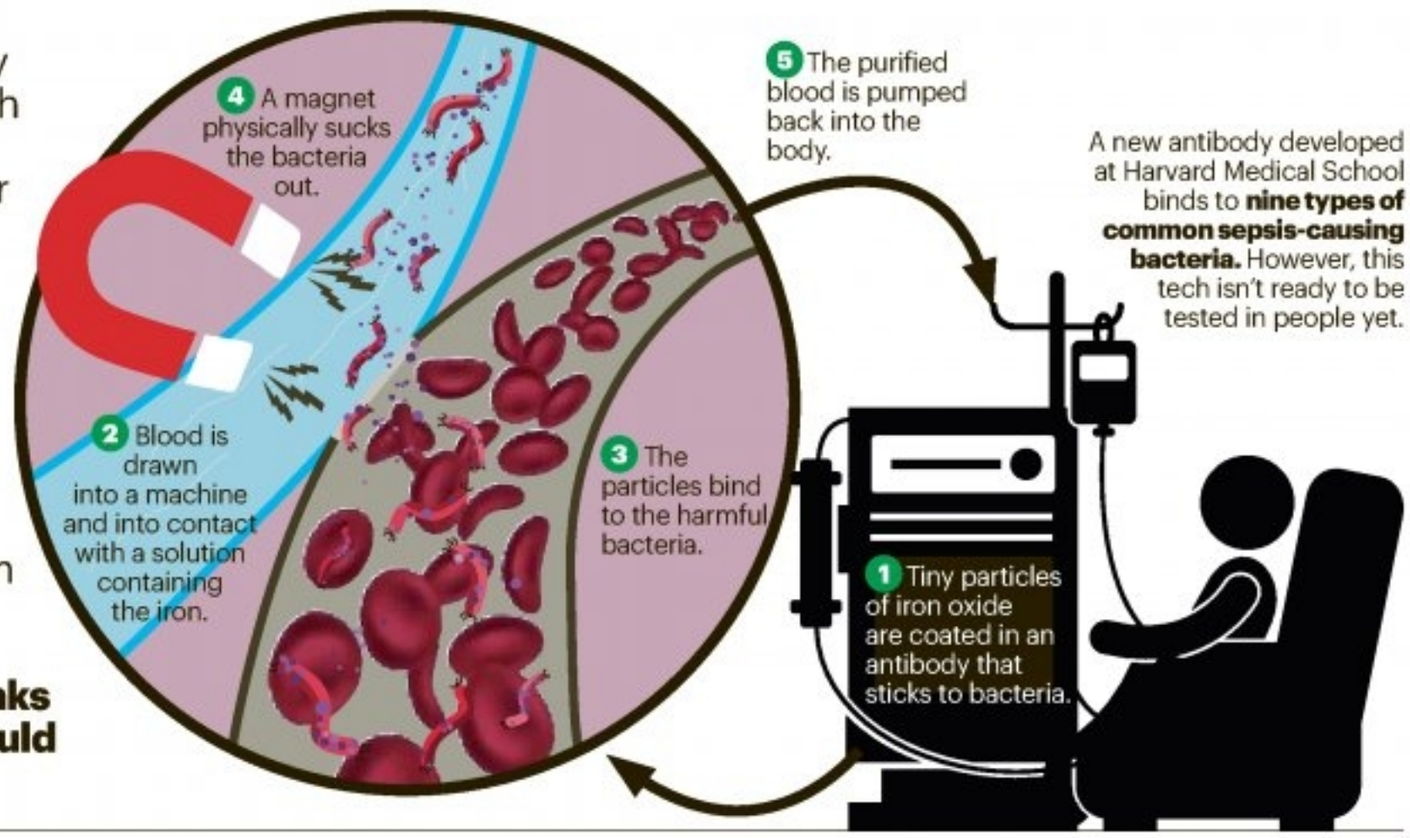
A study of a star like our sun suggests life on Earth will disappear when our sun explodes in 5 billion years, but the planet itself might survive

DECODED by Genna Buck and Andrés Plana

AN ATTRACTIVE FUTURE TREATMENT

Emergency rooms see it every day: Someone with a very high or very low temperature and confusion. They're gasping for breath and going downhill fast. It's **sepsis**, when the immune system launches an all-out attack on an infection, but also damages healthy organs, leading to death in a third of patients. There's often no time to determine exactly which germ is responsible. Treatment is a truckload of antibiotics, life support and lot of hope. **Thanks to nanotechnology, there could soon be a better way.**



A new antibody developed at Harvard Medical School binds to **nine types of common sepsis-causing bacteria.** However, this tech isn't ready to be tested in people yet.

FINDINGS
Your week in science

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PRECOCIOUS POLLUTERS
Carbon dating of 7,000-year-old silt from the Jordan River has shown that Neolithic humans were polluting the water with copper back when they first learned to smelt.

D-N-Awful
Swedish scientists have discovered that a single gene mutation, which causes us to make more omega-3 and 6 fats, is linked to metabolic disease, rheumatism, bowel disease and several cancers. Before we started eating so many calories and so much fat, this may have been helpful.

CITIZEN SCIENTIST by Genna Buck

Why pseudoscience thrives on uncertainty

What are muscle knots? I have a nasty one in my neck. Depending on what you Google, they range from being filled with toxins to being fabrications of massage therapists' imagination. - Heather

Oh man, Heather. That was quite a Google pit you fell into. And now I'm down here with you. So let's find our way out!

First of all, though common, muscle knots are poorly understood. It's not even certain that they're one discrete thing.

Instead, they're defined by a set of symptoms. A knot is a tender area that may feel like a knob of hard tissue deep within a muscle. Putting pressure on it usually causes painful twitching and additional pain in a distant muscle. (Press the knot in your calf, and your foot seizes up).

One major theory says muscle knots are **myofascial trigger points**: bits of hypersensitive connective tissue that cause muscle to tense up painfully. A few imaging studies have found increased stiffness in areas where patients say they have knots.

But recent research suggests the trigger-point theory doesn't hold up. Plus, none of the treatments based on it seem to work.

Some knots could be due to scar tissue from a tear or strain. Nerve swelling may be to blame. But there are no clear answers.

And when there's no clear cause or reliable treatment for a painful condition, quacks and charlatans get visions of dollar signs dancing in their heads.

The cure for this phenomenon is more research. I can personally assure you muscle knots are real. I just can't tell you what they are.

Science Question?
Tweet @genna_buck

PHILOSOPHER CAT
by Jason Logan

metro Your essential daily news

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MANAGING EDITOR VANCOUVER **Jeff Hodson**
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metro WEEKEND
Your essential daily news
MOVIES MUSIC TELEVISION DIGITAL

Natalie Portman has gained the attention of critics for her portrayal of the iconic wife of President John F. Kennedy in Jackie. CONTRIBUTED

Capturing the essence of Jackie

ICON

Portman astounding in role as former First Lady

Steve Gow
For Metro Canada

Natalie Portman is certainly a favourite for an Oscar nomination with her latest performance — as Jackie Kennedy.

After all, the 35-year-old thespian has been winning accolades from the toughest critics for her astounding portrayal of the endearing former First Lady in the eponymous new biopic, Jackie.

"It was the first time that I'd played a character that people know so well; they know exactly what she sounded like and how she moved," recalled Portman during a recent interview about the scrutiny of interpreting the iconic wife of President John F. Kennedy. "You could literally put the images side by side and play them at the same time and see how close I am — you can judge it that closely."

It's no surprise that the role has been viewed under a microscope either. For more than 50 years, the late-icon has been one of America's most admired women. But even as ubiquitous and well-known as Jackie may

> **It was the first time that I'd played a character that people know so well.**
> Natalie Portman

be, Portman admits her education was comprised of "a pretty superficial perception" until she began researching some 20 books in preparation.

"The fact that she coined Camelot was a surprise to me," said Portman of the favourable nickname graced upon the Kennedy presidency. "I always thought that was the press that had come up with that, but I hadn't realized she had named it herself."

Directed by acclaimed foreign director Pablo Larrain (No, Neruda), Jackie is much more than just focused on the superficialities of Jackie's quips or legacy as a fashion icon, however.

Instead, the Chilean auteur aimed to craft a distinctive character study of a conflicted First Lady in the wake of her husband's 1963 assassination — a national tragedy and a mourning she shared with the public. It was this challenge that Portman found "definitely daunting but also nice to do something that you're totally scared of."

"Pablo is an incredible talent and I think he made something really special and unique," added Portman, who truly appreciates the skills of an adept director. "I feel like a lot of directors have their way of what they think they should be saying to actors and it really doesn't work the same for everyone. It's a very specific talent to be able to understand and intuit what an actor needs."

MOVIES

Glimpse into private life

The film explores the nuances of Jackie Kennedy's public and private sides in the immediate aftermath of the assassination of her husband as she plans the funeral, comforts her children and tends to her husband's legacy.

It's what compelled screenwriter Noah Oppenheim to make her the subject of his first script.

"I didn't feel like she had ever gotten enough credit for understanding intuitively the power of television, the power of imagery and iconography and her role in defining how we remember her husband's presidency," he said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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SO VERY '70S

CONTRIBUTED BY HOLLYWOOD SUITE

Sensitive, culturally relevant topics have always had a tough time crossing over to the mainstream. In the 1960s and '70s, filmmakers driven by social change found new and inventive ways to open the conversation on a wide range of difficult-to-tackle subjects and made great films in the process. Here are five tough topics tackled by some iconic films:

Midlife Crisis: A concept that surprisingly only became prominent in the mid-'60s, the cultural discussion about the concept of a midlife crisis took off after Blake Edward's hilarious 1979 comedy 10, which follows a hapless Dudley Moore going to ridiculous lengths to solve his.

The Vietnam War: Before 1978's Coming Home and especially 1979's Apocalypse Now, most films portrayed the Vietnam War in a positive light. Once these films were released, though, it was harder for the public at large to ignore how different Vietnam had been, the horrors individuals had survived in the conflict and the veterans who were slipping through the cracks.

Open Relationships: Though the summer of '69 was all about free love for hippies, Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice explored the practice of New Age thinking among more "square" couples. Despite the film's hesitance to praise these practices, it went on to open the conversation about New Age therapies and alternative relationships in popular culture.

Going "Out West": Work was hard to find in the Maritimes in the '60s and '70s, and many folks headed west only to find more unemployment, but without the comforts of home. Donald Shebib's Goin' Down The Road follows the journey of two men on just such a hopeless quest, and connected audiences across Canada to the struggles of their fellow countrymen.

Home Computers: The late '70s brought computers into homes for the first time, but many families were unsettled by what the true costs of this kind of technology might be. It's no wonder 1977's Demon Seed sees the introduction of computing and automation as something that destroys the sanctity of the traditional home in terrifying ways.

Rediscover the films that reflected changing times. The Hollywood Suite Free Preview is on now until Jan. 5. Enjoy the best movies of the '70s, '80s, '90s and 2000s uncut and commercial-free on four HDTV channels and On Demand, available on most TV providers.

Catch Apocalypse Now, Goin' Down the Road, Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice, Demon Seed and 10 this month on the Hollywood Suite '70s Movies channel. Learn more at hollywoodsuite.ca/freepreview.

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Being a female politician

THRILLER

Miss Sloane finds strong woman caught up in danger

Steve Gow
For Metro Canada

Jessica Chastain embraced her role in Miss Sloane because the issues of gender politics are very much a part of her experience as an actress. CONTRIBUTED

John Madden isn't afraid to admit it: He really admires women.

And it shows in the veteran filmmaker's oeuvre. From the Oscar-nominated Queen Victoria-biopic Mrs. Brown to the Oscar-winning hit Shakespeare in Love, he has crafted a career by considering the complexity of women.

"Almost every film I make ends up being about an empowered woman in a different way," stated Madden recently while promoting his latest thriller Miss Sloane.

"I mean, they are a superior race in my view. Precisely because the balance of emotion, intellect and drive is a balance that all men ought to aspire to and most can't or don't."

Certainly Madden's latest character, the titular Miss Sloane, comprises those commendable qualities, even if they are tested.

When the story's cutthroat lobbyist faces off against Washington's most ferocious power-brokers to take up arms against the gun lobby, she must pay the cost of being a woman of high authority in the political world.

"This piece is not trying to put forward feminist ideas, but nevertheless it's absolutely about female empowerment and all of the key characters moving forward are women," said Madden of the labyrinthine drama.

"The idea that she weaponizes herself and purges herself of everything that makes her an incredibly effective political performer, and in the process connects with something she actually believes in, was quite an interesting story."

The thriller's empowerment theme wouldn't succeed without star Jessica Chastain either, who not only delivers a "virtuoso performance," but embraced the chance to tackle issues that are essential to her art.

"She seeks out roles that are very much defined by gender issues because she's very engaged in that world and I think she was fascinated by it politically," said Madden, who cast Chastain immediately after reading the script.

Having worked with her previously in the 2010 thriller The Debt, Madden realized only an actor as viscerally talented as Chastain could seize the soul of Miss Sloane.

"It has nothing to do with observable technique," said Madden of Chastain's incredible skill for such an intricate, tangled character.

"She has a way of actually deploying her intelligence and emotional intelligence in a way that simply emerges as behaviour."

> She seeks out roles that are very much defined by gender issues because she's very engaged in that world.
> John Madden on Jessica Chastain

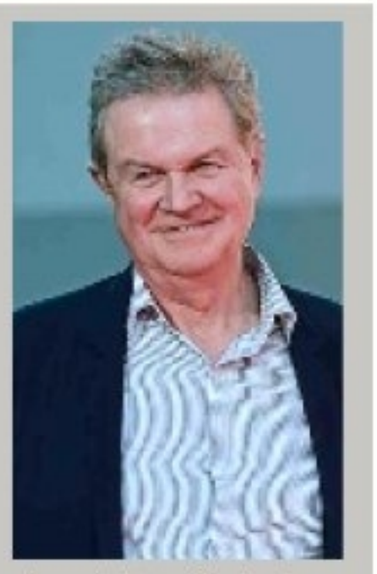
MOVIES

Art imitates life, and the presidential campaign

Filmed amidst the heated U.S. election, Miss Sloane took on new context in light of the gender politics that arose during the campaign.

"The film works in that way and I think that's a potentially very satisfying experience," said Madden.

"Gender politics and the political process itself became the obliterating issues of the presidential race, both of which are installed right at the centre of our film."



Toronto, D.C.?

Although set in Washington, Miss Sloane was filmed in Toronto. Keen eyes will surely recognize many familiar locations.

"Oh dammit, you weren't taken in!" laughed Madden, who admits to filming in such venues as the Royal York Hotel.

"It's the most extraordinary thing we did.

"We shot the majority of the film in about four blocks of the core really."

Dev is in the details

ACTING

Slumdog idol throws himself into role fully

While on the awards trail, Patel said he's taking the opportunity to talk to and learn from his fellow actors on the same path. "The first time around (for Slumdog Millionaire), I was so beautifully naive about it," he laughed. CONTRIBUTED

Dev Patel knows how special a film like Lion is.

He's been waiting nearly eight years, since his breakout in Slumdog Millionaire, for a role as substantive and soulful as Saroo Brierley, an Indian man who was lost as a five-year-old, adopted and raised by Australian parents, and who, 25 years later, used Google Earth to retrace his steps to his hometown and his birthmother, not knowing the name of either.

"I read an article about it somewhere, I'm not quite sure where, and I was completely mesmerized," Patel said.

It's why the 26-year-old pursued the part so aggressively, showing up at screenwriter Luke Davies's doorstep before the script was even finished, and, after winning the part, taking a full eight months to prepare.

Not only did the rail-thin Patel bulk up to play the sporty Saroo, grow his hair out, and learn a difficult Australian accent, but he also fully immersed himself into the emotional and spiritual reality of the man.

Brierley and Patel had to go much deeper than that, though.

This is not a simple boy-goes-home story. Brierley's traumatic separation from his home and his mother and struggle to survive on his own is contrasted by his then-comfortable upbringing in Australia with supportive and loving adoptive parents.

His past is something that he represses for years, until it becomes a ghost so undeniable that he must do everything he can to find his mother.

It's one of those stranger-than-fiction stories that begs for cinematic treatment.

"I can't say that the majority or even half the movie is sensationalized. It really isn't. It actually happened in real life," Brierley said.

On set, director Garth Davis pushed Patel deeper into Brierley's pain.

He had Patel watch the actor playing the five-year-old Brierley (newcomer Sunny Pawar) so that there were specific memories to draw on.

He threw him into big scenes right off the bat (they shot the very last scene first), and he made him do "hippie" mental exercises like staring into a mirror for a half hour before coming to set one day.

"The first two minutes were excruciating, because when you do that, you're usually brushing your teeth or popping a pimple or something and then the next 20 minutes all of a sudden I got sucked into this sort of trance-like state and I couldn't recognize the person staring back at me," Patel said.

"I looked like my father, I looked like my mother. And I went to set visibly shaken. I was like 'Garth, I feel like a fool, like I don't know who I am. I think that the task went horribly wrong.' He looked at me and said, 'that's exactly what you should feel. Your body is just a shell but your soul is ever-changing. I was like 'whoa.'"

It was all in service of capturing the essence of Brierley, who Patel knows he doesn't look like.

For Patel, the stories represent completely different journeys — Brierley is a modern Australian man who remembers little of his Indian identity.

Patel is already fully on the awards trail for Lion. He's done this before, but now has more experience and is no longer that wide-eyed 18-year-old.

He said he's taking advantage of the opportunity to talk to and learn from his fellow actors on the same path.

"The first time around I was so beautifully naive about it. I look at Sunny and I can relate to it. He met Bill Clinton the other day and I don't quite think it dawned on him who the man was he was meeting," Patel said, laughing.

Ultimately, Patel is grateful that he was able to stretch beyond "your usual quirky best friend character role."

"Stories like this, they're so few and far between especially for a British Indian guy like myself," he said. "I think everyone faces a stereotype ... I don't want to make it about that. It's just my thought process of throwing absolutely everything at this role. I knew how precious it was."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BIOPIC

Film spotlights plight of world's children

Steve Gow
For Metro Canada

After nearly 35 years in movies, Nicole Kidman can handpick any director to work with in Hollywood. Instead, the 49-year-old starlet's latest project was helmed by first-timer Garth Davis — an artist more famous for making Coke commercials than feature films.

"He's a really talented director," said Kidman during an interview for Lion. "Garth is just very easy; he's got a very soulful, laid-back approach to things and so I was just very happy to be a part of his vision."

Inasmuch as the Toronto International Film Festival's People' Choice runner-up was envisaged by Davis, Lion is truly the celluloid realization of the life of Saroo Brierley — a young Indian man who, at five years old, was tragically separated from his family and finds himself living on Calcutta streets.

Unable to speak the local tongue and sleeping in train stations, Saroo's epic odyssey ends up miles away in Australia where he eventually finds salvation in an adoptive mother named Sue Brierley.

"It was definitely how Saroo remembered that experience," explained Davis of the heart-wrenching memoir. "I'm just presenting the story as I understand it so I think some people won't even accept it because its just too crazy to believe."

But the film is also a profound eye-opener to the plight of thousands of kids around the globe. As much as Davis aimed to unweave an inspirational family drama, he was soon making a movie with a message.

"It's just one of those disturbing truths that there are kids sleeping at the train station even today," said Davis. "We didn't realize just how many kids go missing — it's a big issue (and) if anything can bring some dialogue and awareness about it, that's great."

As for Kidman, she was simply overjoyed with finding a connection to Brierley and the chance to express her own devotion as mother to two adopted children.

"Just like her speech (in the film) when she said she had this vision of a brown-skinned child and then it all came to fruition — I just related," admitted Kidman, with a laugh. "But she also has red hair, fair skin and she's Australian — so we have a few things in common."

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INTERVIEW

Hilarious distraction from mundane

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

In Office Christmas Party T.J. Miller plays Clay, a scattered office manager with a "mind like a drunk baby." In a last ditch effort to save his branch from closure he tries to woo a lucrative client by throwing a no-holds-barred Christmas party.

"This is the way we close Walter," says Clay. "We throw the best Christmas party he's ever seen. We could save everybody's jobs."

Miller leads an ensemble cast featuring heavy-hitters like Jason Bateman, Olivia Munn, Kate McKinnon and Jennifer Aniston but he doesn't want to talk about that. Not right away, anyway.

Instead he begins the interview with, "Let's talk comedy in a time of tragedy."

OK, lets.

"Basically I have a political obstacle to my social mission statement," he says. "The social statement was, tragedy permeates our everyday lives, people are lonely, they're scared, they have death anxiety, they don't know how to attribute meaning to their own existence, so through comedy we can provide an opiate or distraction that permeates our everyday lives. Through satire we can hopefully frame the world in a way that people can laugh at.

> **Through satire we can hopefully frame the world in a way that people can laugh at.**
> T.J. Miller

When Miller, who also currently plays Erlich Bachman on Silicon Valley, finally gets around to talking about Office Christmas Party, he's still on message.

"It's very easy to promote a comedy during the apocalypse," he says.

The Christmas film, which features a greedy pimp, a sexually repressed head of HR and an office load of drunk, disgruntled employees, is a mix and match of sentimentality and debauchery that Miller thinks is perfect for the season.

"It's a funny movie. It's a laugh a minute. Well, it's a laugh every minute-and-a-half to two minutes. We wanted to give you a break. It's exhausting to laugh every minute."

Workplace environments have become too sterile, says T.J. Miller, right, that "we've lost the fun at work." CONTRIBUTED

Miller, who once worked as a legal secretary in the same Chicago office building seen in the film, says the movie is silly and fun but shares his core comedy philosophy.

"Workplace environments have become so sterile and corporations have become so much about profit and not the people they work with that we've lost the fun of work. We don't have cool office Christmas parties anymore. We are saying, 'You spend so much time with the people you work with, why not have a night or two a year where you can kind of just relax? Take a night off from worrying about offending someone or giving 'tude.'

"That is our message to North America. Take the holidays, drink way too much eggnog, laugh, relax and know that we've got a lot of work to do in 2017."

Washington is as dirty as ever

POLITICAL THRILLER

Miss Sloane is a look at the legal political graft system

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

Jessica Chastain ushers us behind the curtain of the most unscrupulous show in the United States — the lobbying industry — in Miss Sloane. CONTRIBUTED

This weekend Jessica Chastain stars in the political thriller Miss Sloane. The title refers to the lobbyist main character but the film could easily have been titled Drain the Swamp.

Made before Donald Trump became president-elect, it only takes about 20 seconds before the word "trump" crops up in the dialogue. He's never mentioned by name, but this look at "the most morally bankrupt profession since faith healing" paints exactly the ugly picture of behind-the-scenes machinations that Trump railed against on the campaign trail.

Chastain is Elizabeth Sloane, a sleep-deprived D.C. lobbyist "at the forefront of a business with a terrible reputation." She'll represent anyone, it seems, except the gun lobby, who offer her a lucrative contract, only to be laughed at and rejected.

Soon after she leaves her firm — one of the biggest in the country — to join a small, scrappy group who aim to whip up support for a bill that will demand background checks for all gun owners.

It's a new hot-button peek behind the curtain of a political process, but Hollywood has been making Drain the Swamp movies for years.

The explosive Advise and Consent is based on former New York Times congressional correspondent Allen Drury's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about the ratification of a secretary of state and the dirty little secrets people in public life must keep hidden. Political battle lines are drawn as a full frontal attack is launched on the character and credentials of the new nominee.

More recently, in The Ides of March George Clooney (who also directed) played a Democratic Party candidate; the kind of guy who would make the top of Bill O'Reilly's head pop off. He's pro-ecology, anti-oil. He wants to tax the rich and legalize gay marriage. If he leans any further left he'll topple over.

Although Clooney has spoken out about many of these topics in real life, he didn't make a left-wing film. Instead he made a warts-and-all political movie about dirty dealings on the campaign trail.

Finally The Campaign, a comedy starring Will Ferrell and Zach Galifianakis as incumbent congressmen, begins with a quote from former presidential hopeful Ross Perot: "War has rules. Mud wrestling has rules. Politics has no rules."

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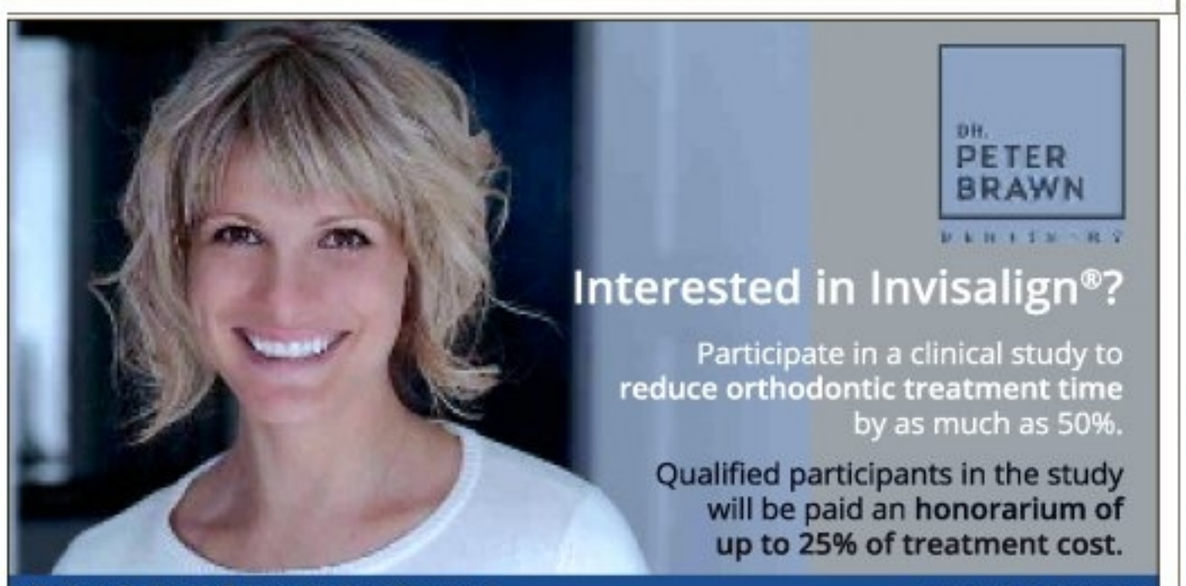

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Can't take the country out of Beyoncé

DADDY LESSONS

Although a Grammy committee is certainly trying

Beyonce earned a whopping nine Grammy nominations Tuesday, including best rock performance, but the singer's twangy song Daddy Lessons was rejected by the Recording Academy's country music committee.

A person familiar with the Grammy nomination process told The Associated Press on Wednesday that Beyonce submitted Daddy Lessons — from her album Lemonade — to the country category. The person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the person was not allowed to speak publicly about the topic, said the country music committee rejected the song.

If Beyonce's song had made it through, it would have been eligible for honours such as best country song and country solo performance.

Representatives for Beyonce and the Grammys didn't immediately reply to emails seeking comment.

Daddy Lessons highlights the Houston native's Southern music roots, incorporating horns, acoustic guitar and hand claps as Beyonce sings about lessons she learned from her father and former manager. The lyrics include references to the Second Amendment, the Bible and shooting guns.

Beyonce performed the track at last month's Country Music Association Awards alongside the Dixie Chicks, and later released a version of the song featuring the country trio.

Earlier in the year, the Chicks covered the song on their tour, and others in the country genre welcomed the tune, including Blake Shelton, who defended the song from critics who say it's not country.

Country star Dierks Bentley told the AP, "There is just something intangible about it that it feels like a country song."

Karen Fairchild of Little Big Town said, "(Beyonce) has some stories to tell — that's clear on Lemonade. And that's what makes country music great."

Beyonce, still, impressed the music world by earning Grammy nominations in the rock, pop, R&B and rap categories — becoming the first artist to earn nominations in those fields in the same year.

Beyonce's nine nominations include the big three: album of the year for Lemonade and song, and record of the year for Formation. She is also competing for best rock performance (Don't Hurt Yourself with Jack White), pop solo performance (Hold Up), rap/sung performance (Freedom with Kendrick Lamar) and urban contemporary album (Lemonade).

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beyoncé's Ankara dress featured in the Daddy Lessons video. LEMONADE/DIGITAL BOOKLET/ SCREENSHOT

MUSIC BRIEFS

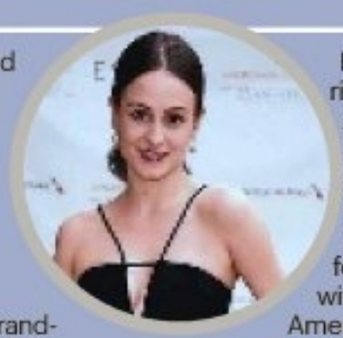
Rolling Stone's Mick Jagger celebrates birth of 8th child

Mick Jagger's representatives say the rock legend has welcomed his eighth child.

Jagger, the 73-year-old frontman of the Rolling Stones, was on hand Thursday at a New York hospital when girlfriend, Melanie Hamrick, gave birth to the couple's son. According to a statement, both parents are "delighted" and "mother and baby are doing well."

Jagger already has seven children — Georgia, James, Jade, Elizabeth, Lucas, Karis and Gabriel — who range in age from their 40s to teenagers.

He became a great-grandfather in May 2014 when Jade's daughter, Assisi, gave birth to a baby girl.



Hamrick is a 29-year-old ballerina who has performed with the American Ballet Theatre in New York. They began dating in 2014. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DOLLY PARTON

Telethon to help wildfire victims

Country icon Dolly Parton has organized a musical telethon to raise money for victims of the Tennessee wildfires that destroyed more than 1,700 homes in the resort town of Gatlinburg.

The event, which will air Dec. 13 on Great American Country, will include performances by Reba McEntire, Kenny Rogers, Alison Krauss and Parton, whose Dollywood theme park in neighbouring Pigeon Forge escaped damage from the fires.

Proceeds from the telethon will go to the Dollywood Foundation My People Fund, which was created to provide $1,000 each month to Sevier County families whose homes were damaged or destroyed by the wildfires.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FIRE FACTS

Officials say 14 people have died and more than 135 were injured in the fire that spread from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Vice CEO Shane Smith says that because his media company has been advocating prison reforms, it will hire released inmates to help them learn valuable on-the-job skills.

NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

REHABILITATION

Ex-convicts to get jobs at Vice Media

Vice Media is starting an apprenticeship program at its Brooklyn headquarters for recently released prison inmates, saying it wants to take action on an issue that the media company has been reporting on for the past few years.

Starting early next year, Vice will hire five former inmates for production, editorial and marketing jobs, the company said Thursday. If it works well, Vice will look to expand and encourage other companies to start their own programs.

Vice, the thriving youth-oriented company with magazines, cable and digital channels and news shows that air on HBO, has focused on prison reform since its documentary Fixing the System was shown on HBO in 2015.

Vice CEO Shane Smith said that while the apprentice program is a small step toward tackling the high recidivism rate among former inmates, he wanted to "alleviate some of these issues by putting our money where our mouth is."

The company is working with the New York-based Center for Employment Opportunities, which is employing more than 7,000 former inmates in temporary jobs with the hope they develop skills and a work history that would lead to more permanent employment. The centre helps employ people in New York, California, Pennsylvania and Oklahoma.

Everyone at Vice who has reported on prison issues was struck by the difficulties faced by people once they get out, said Alyssa Mastromonaco, the company's COO, who formerly worked in the Obama White House. Studies have outlined the difficulty former inmates have in landing jobs once they get out, and how hard it is for them to keep away from crime when they can't.

It took a while to start because Vice wanted a program where participants were learning valuable skills for a modern economy, Mastromonaco said.

"It's not just activism, rallying for a cause," she said. "This is meaningful institutional change if you can do it."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A world of imagination

Meliá Cuba properties offer kids a magical escape

Of Meliá Cuba's 27 hotels, 16 of its all-inclusive Cubans resorts cater to families, offering children and the young at heart a magical, fun-filled getaway. Designed with family budgets in mind, the hotels are located in Cuba's most popular beach destinations, offering such kid-friendly activities as sports, arts and crafts and cooking — both with families and with the resorts' team of professional bilingual monitors.

Next stop: Paradise

Families can indulge at the Paradisus Varadero Resort and Spa with the opening of the new Family Concierge section. This exclusive new addition includes 284 junior suites and suites designed to impress those looking for the ultimate in luxury accommodations. Forty of the rooms have direct access to the pool along with a private garden terrace. The section also features three exclusive gourmet restaurants — along with privileged access to all six à la carte restaurants of the main hotel — as well as bars and pools. Luxurious touches include a baby club and mini club as well as a game room, ensuring that children enjoy their holiday as much as their parents. The specially assigned Family Concierge will help guests during their stay and coordinate services and reservations, so families can concentrate on enjoying themselves. For larger families, Family Suites are available at the resort and Master two-bedroom Suites are available at the Family Concierge. Discover the Yhi Spa — offering packages designed specially for moms and daughters — as well as exclusive Watsu treatments. Not to be outdone, the Meliá Peninsula Varadero offers a Family Section like no other, with a baby and mini club, a pool for kids and a game room, and its Family Suites that can accommodate up to six people.

Fun for everyone

Multi-generational families will feel at home at the Meliá Las Dunas in Cayo Santa María, which features a distinctive adults-only section as well as a family section with a kids-only pool and a baby, mini and teenage club. The resort also boasts a Yhi Spa, complete with a modern gym, climbing wall and four tennis courts. Surrounded by lush gardens, the beach hosts a gazebo, making this resort an excellent option for weddings and the renewal of vows.

Located directly on the beach in Cayo Coco, the very modern Meliá Jardines del Rey is home to a wide array of activities, six restaurants and sumptuous gardens. With its newly enlarged and improved beach, this property is sure to please beach lovers. For those who prefer a more active holiday, this hotel also offers a mini club and a game room, as well as a kids-only pool — a smart choice for families.

Further down the coast in Holguín, the Sol Río de Luna y Mares resort faces the turquoise beach of Playa Esmeralda. Its location is stunning, nestled among lush gardens and just steps away from Cuba's top aquarium. Explore these and other unforgettable resorts at meliacuba.com.

CONTRIBUTED

The best books to look into

READING ROUNDUP

Page-turning gifts to suit everyone on Santa's list

Tanya Enberg

With traditional books experiencing a resurgence, this holiday season give loved ones the gift of a good read they can curl up with. This round up of 2016 titles is sure to please little bookworms, lifelong word lovers, and every type of reader in between.

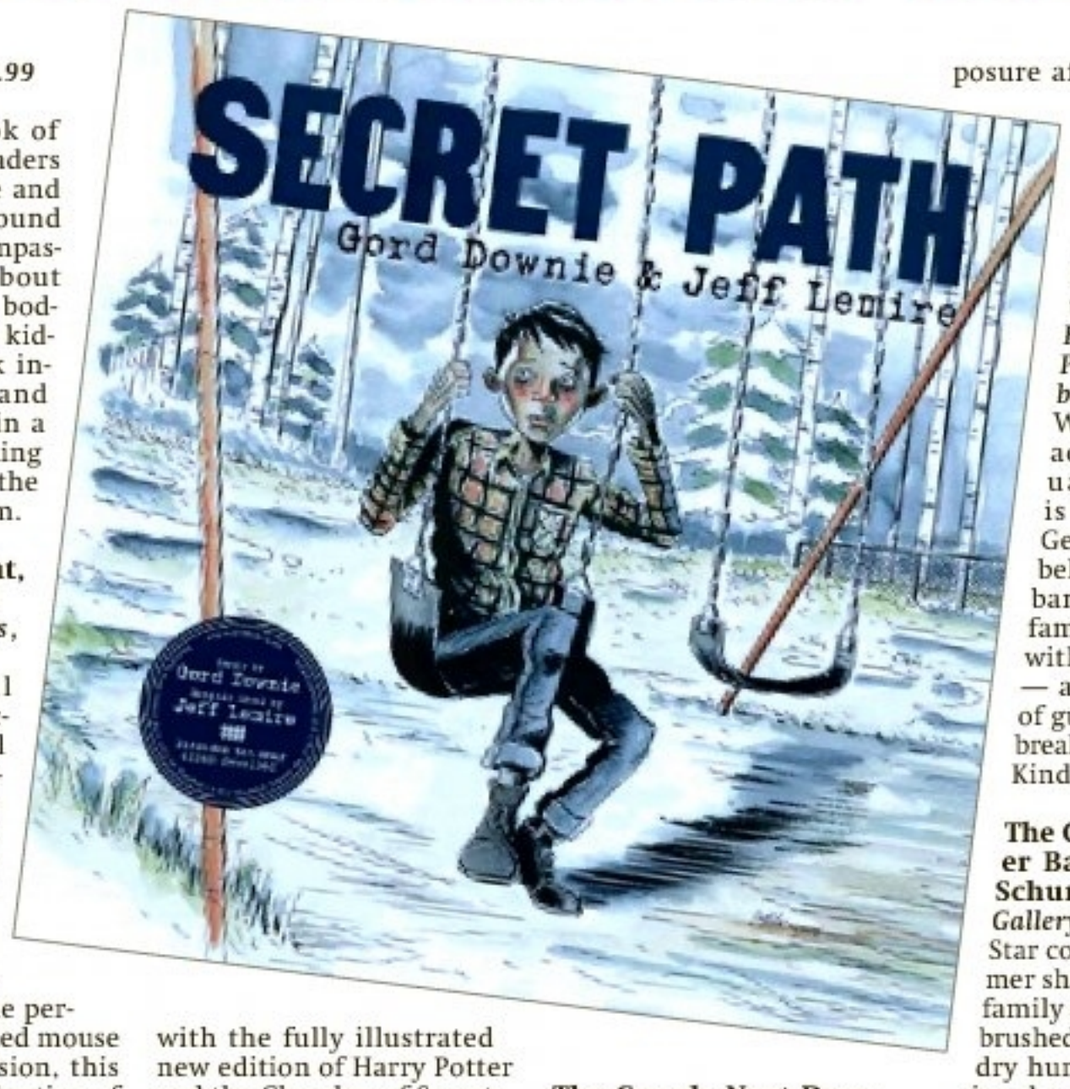
For children

The Darkest Dark, Chris Hadfield
Tundra, $22.99, Ages 4-8
Inspired by astronaut Chris Hadfield as a child, The Darkest Dark tells the story of young Chris, who is brave pretending to be an astronaut, however when bedtime arrives, so does his biggest fear — darkness. After watching the Apollo 11 moon landing on TV, Chris discovers beauty in the unknown — even when it's at its darkest.

The Barefoot Book of Children, Tessa Strickland and Kate DePalma, illustrated by David Dean
Barefoot Books (available at barefootbooks.com) $24.99 Ages 3-8
The Barefoot Book of Children takes readers on an imaginative and insightful trip around the world, with compassionate lessons about feelings, families, bodies and food. This kid-empowering book inspires curiosity and helps children gain a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them.

They All Saw a Cat, Brendan Wenzel
Chronicle Books, $23.99, Ages 3-5
With whimsical drawings and lyrical prose, They All Saw a Cat is simple and smart. The New York Times bestseller follows a cat whose features transform as it is seen through the eyes of various creatures. From the perspective of a terrified mouse to a bat's night vision, this is an amusing celebration of observation.

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, J.K. Rowling, illustrated by Jim Kay
Bloomsbury USA, $49.99 Ages 9+
Take a spellbinding journey into the world of wizards with the fully illustrated new edition of Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. Bubbling over with magic, humour and beloved characters, this delightful reimagining is a home-library must for Harry Potter fans.



For adults

Faithful, Alice Hoffman
Simon & Schuster, $32
A car accident leaves a teenage girl in a coma and her best friend dealing with crippling guilt in Alice Hoffman's Faithful. High schooler Shelby Richmond downward spirals as she struggles with survivor's guilt and tries to move on.

The Wonder, Emma Donoghue
HarperCollins Canada, $32.99
Set in a small 1850s Irish village, locals and out-of-towners become captivated by the miraculous story of a girl who is said to have survived for months without food. The child also draws skeptics and is placed under the watch of a nurse determined to reveal whether she is a medical miracle or fraud.

The Couple Next Door, Shari Lapena
Doubleday Canada, $24.95, paperback
From the first page, suspense unfolds when Anne and Marco Conti return home to find their front door open and an empty crib where their baby should be in the unsettling thriller, The Couple Next Door. The parents fall under suspicion, tension rises and secrets are revealed with each shocking twist and turn.

Secret Path, Gord Downie
Simon & Schuster, $26.99
Singer Gord Downie brings to light the mistreatment of children at residential schools with Secret Path, a 10-song album featuring a graphic novel by Jeff Lemire. It tells the story of Chanie "Charlie" Wenjack, a 12-year-old boy who died of hunger and exposure after running away from a Kenora, Ont. school in 1966 to try and get home.

The Best Kind of People, Zoe Whittall
House of Anansi Press, $22.95, paperback
When a bombshell accusation of sexual impropriety is brought against George Woodbury, a beloved teacher, husband and father, his family is left to cope with denial and anger — and the possibility of guilt —in the heartbreaking book, The Best Kind of People.

The Girl with the Lower Back Tattoo, Amy Schumer
Gallery Books, $36.99
Star comedian Amy Schumer shares stories of love, family and friendship, all brushed with her signature dry humor in this confessional collection of essays. Schumer's sassiness is evident throughout, but she also delves into deeper terrain, too, opening up about her father's multiple sclerosis and ending gun violence.

Cookbooks

Small Victories: Recipes, Advice + Hundreds of Ideas for Home-Cooking Triumphs, Julia Turshen
Chronicle Books, $50
Small Victories is brimming with culinary inspiration for seasoned and beginner home cooks. Featuring more than 400 recipes, from turkey and Ricotta meatballs to peach and bourbon milkshakes, the pages are filled with flavours for all occasions.

Green Kitchen Smoothies: Healthy and Colorful Smoothies for Every Day, David Frenkiel and Luise Vindahl
Hardie Grant, $27.99
Whether seeking an energy boost or wanting to sneak more veggies into your child's diet, Green Kitchen Smoothies shines with fresh ideas, from orange sesame smoothies to the deceptively healthy cacao-rich banana Snickers shake. Get ready to salivate — and bust out the blender.

Oh She Glows Every Day: Quick and Satisfying Plant-Based Recipes, Angela Liddon
Penguin Canada, $32
Oakville based Angela Liddon is back with a collection of recipes so fresh, you'll feel healthier just flipping through the pages. Teeming with yummy, family-approved ideas (think eggplant Parmesan and stuffed avocado salad), Liddon's creations are quick, easy and immensely tempting.

All books listed are hardcover unless otherwise noted. Prices may vary, retailer dependent.

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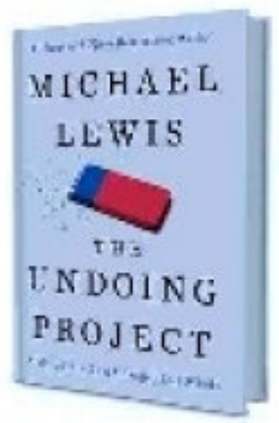
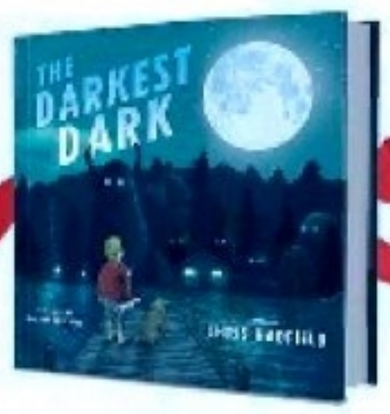


The author of *Flash Boys* and *Moneyball* tells the story of two men who may well have changed, for good, humanity's view of its own mind. **NOW $25** REG $38.95



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MECCANO MICRONOID
$54.95

GIFTS OF THE WEEK

MAKE IT MERRY FOR EVERYONE ON YOUR LIST, WITH GIFTS THAT GO TOGETHER.

LOOKING FOR A GIFT RECOMMENDATION? #ASKINDIGO

*Offers valid while quantities last now through December 12, 2016 in-store (excluding kiosk orders), unless otherwise indicated. No price adjustments on previous purchases or in conjunction with other offers. *Offer valid December 8 - 11, 2016 in-store and online. Excludes electronics and related accessories, American Girl® (other than Wellie Wishers™), Herschel Supply Company Limited products, LEGO® Ideas & Mindstorms, giftcards, irewards memberships, and Love of Reading products and donations. Discount applies to lowest priced qualifying item purchased. Indigo, Chapters, and Coles are trademarks of Indigo Books & Music Inc.

Tablets, laptops and 2-in-1s, oh my!

HOOK IT UP

Lots of choice if you're gifting a new computer

Marc Saltzman

'Tis the season to shop for consumer electronics — especially if you want to take advantage of the sales on tablets, laptops and 2-in-1s, a trendy hybrid of the two form factors.

Whether you're looking to wrap up something to put under the tree or want to treat yourself to a new device, you might be overwhelmed with the various options available. If that's the case, here are a few solid suggestions, divided by form factor.

Tablets

Powered by Android, Samsung Galaxy Tab A ($199) is a slender 7-inch tablet with a 1.3GHz quad-core processor, two cameras, and 8GB of storage — with up to 200GB of additional storage through optional microSD cards.

For those with a healthier budget and desire for a larger device, Samsung Galaxy Tab E ($259) is a 9.6-inch tablet with 16GB of storage, expandable memory, dual cameras, and many other features.

Available with a 9.7-inch (from $799) or 12.9-inch (from $1,049) display, Apple's iPad Pro is a versatile device that lets you tap, swipe or draw on its sharp Retina display — including support for precision work via Apple Pencil. Designed for mobile professionals and creative types, iPad Pro supports countless quality apps and split-screen tasks.

The first tablet that can truly replace your laptop, Microsoft's Surface Pro 4 (from $1,179) is a Windows 10 machine with a powerful Intel Core processor, PC-like ports, Surface Pen stylus (included), integrated multi-angle kickstand, and starting at 128GB of solid state storage. Snap on one of the multiple magnetic Type Covers, with its integrated keyboard and trackpad (sold separately for $169.99), and you can get your work done, anytime and anywhere.

Laptops

Acer Swift 7 ($1,299) is the world's thinnest laptop at less than a centimetre thick — 9.98 millimetres, to be exact. Available in black and gold, this Windows 10 machine features a 13.3-inch (non-touch) IPS display with Corning Gorilla Glass, large trackpad, and in the performance department, it's one of the first laptops powered by Intel's 7th Gen Core processor for fast speeds and exceptional battery life (up to nine hours).

Also a svelte pick is the 14-millimetre thick ASUS ZenBook UX306 ($1,289), a premium Windows 10 PC that's light on weight, but heavy on features. The 2.6-pound laptop is powered by a 6th-generation Intel Core processor, up to 16GB of RAM (system memory) and 512GB of SSD storage, and the latest USB Type-C port. Perhaps the most impressive aspect of this 13.3-inch ZenBook is its battery, which lasts up to 12 hours between charges.

2-in-1s

At $849.99, the HP Pavilion X360 is also a 13-inch device, but the screen is on an innovative 360-degree hinge, allowing you to choose from one of four modes: laptop, tablet, stand, and tent. This versatile "convertible" PC — also known as a "2-in-1" hybrid — is powered by Windows 10 and an Intel Core i3 processor.

And now for something completely different. The award-winning Lenovo Yoga Book ($649 for Android, $749 for Windows) is also a compact 2-in-1.

While one half of the clamshell device has a 10.1-inch screen, the other half is a touch-enabled surface instead of a physical keyboard; a "Halo" touch keyboard appears when you want to type, offering haptic vibration and auto-correction, or you can place paper down to draw or take notes and a digital version shows up on the screen in real time. Battery life tops 13 hours.

Prices subject to change

1. Apple's iPad Pro
2. Acer Swift 7
3. ASUS ZenBook UX306
4. HP Pavilion X360
5. Samsung Galaxy Tab A
6. Lenovo Yoga Book
7. Microsoft's Surface Pro 4

Tech it out: Hot gadget gift ideas

RECOMMENDATIONS

Not sure what to buy your loved ones over the holidays?

Marc Saltzman

Some advice for those about to start their holiday shopping: Don't buy clothes for someone else — they may smile and thank you for the lime green cardigan but they'll hunt for the gift receipt when they get home. Lottery tickets and gift cards are cop-outs. Jewelry is too personal to pick out. And don't even think about fancy bath soaps (they still haven't used what you bought them last year).

Instead, if you want to see a genuine smile stretch upon the faces of loved ones, buy them some cool technology. And no, you don't need to break the bank to pick great gadget gifts. So, whether you're in need of high-tech ideas or want to indulge in something for yourself, here are a few sweet suggestions.

Nintendo NES Classic Edition: Sold out across the country, but with Santa's elves working on more before Christmas Eve, the Nintendo NES Classic Edition ($79.99) lets you relive some of your beloved childhood video games on your big-screen TV.

This mini version of the iconic Nintendo Entertainment System houses 30 pre-installed eight-bit classics of yesteryear, such as Super Mario Bros, Donkey Kong, The Legend of Zelda, PAC-MAN, Metroid, Mega Man, and Final Fantasy.

The teeny console also ships with a full-size NES Classic Controller, plus you can add a second for two-player fun (sold separately for $12.99), and it also includes an HDMI cable to plug into a television.

TomTom Spark 3: Building on its popular predecessor, TomTom Spark 3 Cardio + Music Bundle GPS Fitness Watch ($349.99) leverages TomTom's heritage in GPS location and mapping to be a trusted companion while jogging, running, cycling, swimming, and more (and it works indoors, too). Along with its integrated heart-rate monitor and multiple sports mode, a new feature called Route Exploration lets runners plan and upload up to 15 routes to their watch, and then follow along on the screen.

Elektronista Digital Clutch: Women on the go can carry their tech with style. Available in multiple colours, Knomo's Elektronista Digital Clutch ($199 to $299) fits up to a 10-inch tablet, as well as other items such as your wallet, keys, smartphone, earbuds, and hand cream, in multiple sections and zipped pockets for easy access to your stuff. Built into this clutch is a 5,000-milliamp power pack, with microUSB charging cable, so you can juice up your smartphone when needed (roughly twice, depending on the model).

TP-Link Touch P5 Router: This wireless router works as well as it looks. The TP-Link Touch P5 ($199.99) is a touchscreen-enabled Wi-Fi Gigabit Router with AC1900 speeds for fast and reliable performance, for all your home's wireless devices: computers, tablets, smartphones, printers, video game consoles, smart TVs, and more. Along with the one-minute set-up, the touchscreen also lets you enable parental controls, if desired; set up dual bands to minimize interference (2.4GHz and 5GHz); and it also works with an optional smartphone app to tweak settings and permissions.

Samsung Gear 360: Rethink how holiday moments are captured and shared with the Samsung Gear 360 ($499.99), a compact camera that can shoot 360-degree video (or photos), which can then be played back on virtual reality headsets, or as an interactive 360-degree video on YouTube or Facebook. It's never been easier (or cheaper) to create content — perfect for family vacations, holiday get-togethers and other once-in-a-lifetime events — you may want to relive time and time again after the fact.

Kobo Aura One: What to buy an avid book lover who might want to read everywhere life takes them? The Kobo Aura One ($249) is a premium ebook reader with a large 7.8-inch display, about the size of a hardcover book, and with a high-resolution e-ink screen that looks like real ink on paper. Whether you want to lounge around the pool, at a beach, on a deck at the cottage, or while slipping into a bubble bath, the latest Kobo is IPX8-certified, which means it can remain underwater as deep as two metres, or 6.5 feet, for up to 60 minutes. The anti-glare e-ink screen can be read clearly in bright sunlight, or take advantage of the integrated light to read while curled up in bed. The Kobo eBookstore features more than five million titles, plus you can borrow ebooks for free from your local library. Battery life lasts a month between charges. *Product prices may vary.*

CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT: TOMTOM SPARK 3; TP-LINK TOUCH P5 ROUTER; NINTENDO NES CLASSIC EDITION; KOBO AURA ONE; SAMSUNG GEAR 360; ELEKTRONISTA DIGITAL CLUTCH

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CHARITY GIFT GIVING

Stretch your charitable dollars further

ISTOCK

The holiday season is not just about receiving gifts — it's also about giving. It's no secret that Canadians are generous. In 2015, Canadians ranked sixth on the CAW World Giving Index ranking with 65 per cent of Canadians donating money and 38 per cent volunteering time.

This year, learn how to give back in creative ways or look for opportunities to stretch your charitable dollars even further. Here are some tips to help you get in the spirit of giving:

Start a change jar. Challenge your family to put all of their spare change into a jar. At the end of the month, decide where to donate the money together.

Donate your talents. If you're a graphic design wiz, help your favourite local non-profit create new materials for an upcoming campaign.

3. Stretch your donation dollars. Add value to monetary donations by giving to a cause through companies that top up or match donations. For example, until Dec. 31, PayPal will add an additional one per cent to all donations made through CanadaHelps.org. CanadaHelps is a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing charitable giving across the country by making it easier to donate and fundraise online.

4. Give gifts that give back. Buy gifts from retailers who give back to a charity or cause. For example, tentree, a Canadian clothing company, plants 10 trees for every purchase made. Peace Collective supports the Breakfast for Learning program through select purchases.

5. Involve your friends. Host a give-back challenge among colleagues to see who can raise the most money or donate the most time to their favourite organizations throughout the month of December.

-NEWS CANADA

A $50 DONATION IS GOOD FOR ONE CATARACT SURGERY.

This holiday season, help a blind person see. With a $50 donation, you will provide a life-changing cataract surgery to someone in need in the developing world.
Donate at seva.ca or call 1-877-460-6622.

Seva CANADA

Supporting Seva Canada and giving children the gift of sight

CONTRIBUTED

Parents of twins know everything in life comes twofold: twice the diapers, twice the mischief, and two bright futures ahead.

Missing out on an education themselves, the parents of four-year-old twin boys, Sharuk and Suhail Sherif, proudly sent their sons to school in the city of Pondicherry, India.

But when a sponsored eye screening at the school revealed each boy had cataracts in both eyes, the entire family was left heartbroken.

"Already struggling to afford the basic needs of food and shelter for their family, the parents could not cover the costs of surgery for two children," explains Penny Lyons, executive director of Seva Canada (seva.ca).

Finding and treating children with eye problems under the age of 5 is crucial to ensuring healthy vision for life.

Lyons says that's why Seva donors help conduct free screenings for thousands of children in developing countries each year.

"Without proper care, kids like Sharuk and Suhail would struggle to finish school, be dependent on a caregiver, and face difficult, life-long challenges."

Cataract surgery and follow-up care for a child is just $150. In fact, children who have their vision restored are given an average of 50 years of sight, according to Lyons.

Fortunately for Sharuk and Suhail, both boys received life-changing cataract surgery, glasses and follow-up care, all thanks to Seva Canada donors.

Their parents are grateful to have two rambunctious, playful boys on their hands, whose futures shine bright once again.

LIGHTS OF HOPE DO MORE THAN SPARKLE

Drawing both locals and tourists to Burrard St. for the past 18 years, the Lights of Hope display on the front of St. Paul's Hospital signals the start of the holiday season in the city. Lights of Hope is so much more than a seasonal display — funds raised support Enhanced Patient Care grants, a diverse and unique program of care for the patients of St. Paul's.

"When you give to Lights of Hope, you support projects large and small, simple and complex," explains St. Paul's Foundation president and CEO, Dick Vollet. "Your support helps patients in over 50 hospital programs."

Healing is the focus of Enhanced Patient Care grants, which cater to patients and their individual care needs. Here are a few examples of the work made possible with Lights of Hope donations:

1. The Art Cart program, providing a creative outlet for dialysis patients who pass long hours hooked up to a machine.

2. The pet therapy program, bringing in dogs to brighten the day for patients throughout the hospital.

3. Healing circles run in the All Nations Sacred Space with traditional foods and medicines.

This year, donations to Lights of Hope (lightsofhope.com) could go to one of the programs above, or something on the current wish list at St. Paul's. Right now, maternity staff are awaiting a "bili blanket".

Entirely funded by donations, this blanket allows newborns with jaundice to receive phototherapy treatment while being fed and cuddled by their families.

"The downside of traditional light therapy is that the baby must be placed in an incubator with its eyes covered by a shield in order to receive the treatment. With the bili blanket, we won't need to separate mother and baby," says Mary Radmanovic, maternity patient care manager at St. Paul's. Watch social media (facebook.com/helpstpauls) for this year's wish list to see examples of the programs and patients your donations could support.

Bili Blanket. CONTRIBUTED

metro TRAVEL
Your essential daily news

Airline offer discounts to San Luis Potosi, Mexico, after open invite to party goes viral

San Fran is a food paradise

GASTRONOMY

Kitchens kick quality up several tasty notches

Renée S. Suen
For Torstar News Service

"Cantonese cuisine is about searching for this perfection in the ingredient, treating it simply so that people can taste the quality of the product. That's what I want in my food: a Californian vibe but that Cantonese simplicity," says chef Brandon Jew on his restaurant Mr. Jiu's in North America's first and largest Chinatown. KASSIE BORRESON

"Restaurants should be about how you can provide greater pleasure to people," says Joshua Skenes when asked about the uninhibitedly luxurious 18-course Discovery menu at his three Michelin-starred restaurant, Saison.

A master of live-fire and smoke, Skenes' cooking is refined, yet restrained. Pristine ingredients are showcased with minimum intervention, like the opening volley of complimentary Krug, buttery-rich, wood-fire baked biscuit (using flour milled on premise) with a mountain of reserve caviar cured in house-smoked salt. The experience is exquisite, rising well above its special occasion contemporaries.

Saison is one of America's best (and most expensive) restaurants, although Skenes doubts it would have flourished outside of San Francisco.

Known for its landmarks and concentration of tech companies, San Francisco boasts enviable edible options beyond sourdough bread or Ghirardelli chocolates. From Hog Island's sustainable oysters, RoliRoti's naturally raised crackling-studded porchetta sandwich, the super burrito at La Taqueria, to Boulettes Larder's cannelles that bests those from Bourdeax, it's hard not to eat well here.

Home to Michelin-christened and James Beard award–winning chefs and restaurants, the Bay Area is credited with fuelling food trends, such as Chez Panisse's local-sustainable-organic movement and the maker-culture fetishized $4 artisanal toast.

Using local ingredients may be ubiquitous in the region, but some kitchens are exacting new standards in quality.

Aaron London of AL's Place credits an exclusive farmer-restaurant relationship with Blue Dane Garden's Rose Becker for the flavours in his vegetable-dominant menu.

Thanks to the abundance of farmers markets, Bar Agricole's Melissa Reitz suspects San Franciscans are comfortable accepting the natural ebbs and flows associated with farm-fresh produce because they already eat that way at home.

In a market saturated with restaurants and skyrocketing rents, London cautions that the cooking has excelled out of necessity to survive: "You take great product, add in New York City pace and competition, and suddenly we have something that's hard to compete with."

Lazy Bear owner David Barzelay, Food & Wine's Best New Chef 2016, concurs. "You need to have something unique and compelling. Getting the best ingredients is a prerequisite, but you have to use it in a way that speaks to who you are as a chef and what the restaurant is."

Frustrated with the perception that Chinese food is cheap and greasy, Brandon Jew, a third generation Chinese-American, opened Mister Jiu's. He aims to define modern San Francisco Chinese food by amalgamating the traditions and customs of his elders with the flavours from his American upbringing and training.

The recreated Chinese pantry incorporates ingredients such as Calabrian salami from an area charcutier instead of Jinhua ham in the XO sauce. Scallion pancakes are made with sourdough, and roasted beet purée replaces red food colouring in the char siu sauce.

"I want to have people celebrate Chinese food again," he says. "It has the same soul but it's symbolic of the terroir here."

Renée S. Suen was hosted by San Francisco Travel and CityPASS, which did not review or approve this story.

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NOT A TOURIST | A letter from Mark Stachiew in Anguilla

Tennis not just for posh tourists on this island

Over its 21 years of existence, the Anguilla Tennis Academy has helped teach tennis to more than 4,000 kids aged 5 to 17 and some of its most elite athletes have gone on to win athletic scholarships at American universities. RENUKA HARRIGAN

Beneath the impossibly blue skies of the Caribbean paradise of Anguilla, I sat in the shade of a palm tree, watching pairs of teenagers playing tennis on rows of immaculate courts.

These weren't the offspring of well-to-do vacationers. They were local children who were members of the Anguilla Tennis Academy, the fancy-sounding name of an institution that began 21 years ago with the primary goal of making tennis affordable for ordinary Anguillan kids and teaching them all the life lessons that go along with dedicating themselves to becoming good at a sport.

The academy is the brainchild of Mitchelle Lake who was once a local kid himself but was able to translate his own skill at tennis into a scholarship at an American university. He wants to use the academy to give a new generation of Anguillan kids the chance to have the same opportunity that he did.

I met up with him in Anguilla last month while the academy prepared to host the inaugural Anguilla Cup, an International Tennis Federation junior tournament brought to the tiny Caribbean island by the Anguilla Tourist Board and organized by Jamaican-Canadian Karl Hale, CEO of Sports Travel Experts and Tournament Director for the Rogers Cup in Toronto.

"I went to school on a tennis scholarship and when I found out you can have your school paid for and your books and everything, I came back in my freshman year to Anguilla and started this program so other kids could go to school because my parents couldn't send me to school," said Lake.

"I had 35 children the first year with three rackets. I would feed the ball and they would hit it and feed the racket down the line and all of those kids would stand in line and wait for that racket to be passed to them," he remembered.

He gave tennis lessons at the island's resorts in exchange for used equipment and before long guests were giving him their old equipment for the kids. Over time, he was able to build on the generosity of the island's wealthy visitors and with a combination of drive, charm and enthusiasm, he raised the money necessary to start his state-of-the-art tennis academy. He continues to solicit donations to help pay for its operating costs and the loan necessary to finish the school's construction and his dream of building a 2,500-seat stadium nearby.

"I was on the front lines, watching all these children make great sacrifices and that's the motivation for me," Lake told me. "I tell them in life, there is a cost and there is a cause. If the cause is greater than the cost, it must be done. For the Anguilla Tennis Academy, the cause is greater than the cost so $2 million doesn't matter to me because there is no value that you can put on what I'm seeing here. The changes and the lives I've seen over 21 years, the stories are amazing."

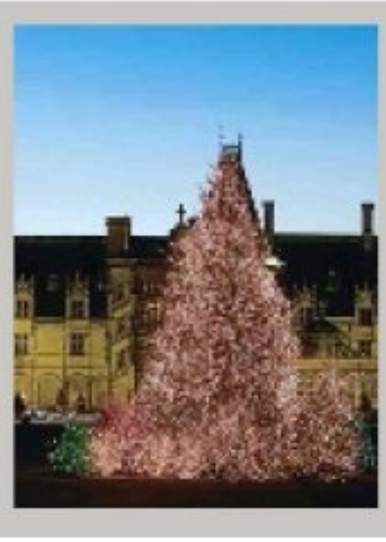
TRAVEL NOTES BUTCH CASSIDY'S BOYHOOD HOME, CONTROVERSIAL DESTINATION PICK & BOY SCOUTS PACK THEIR BADGES

Utah to restore famous outlaw's cabin

Utah state officials are going to spend $138,000 U.S. to restore a decaying wood cabin in Piute County that has become a tourist spot because it's believed to be the boyhood home of outlaw Butch Cassidy. Cassidy, whose real name was Robert Leroy Parker, was born in Beaver in 1866 and the Parker family did live in the Circleville cabin. It is unknown if Cassidy lived there or if he had already left to live the life of an outlaw. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lonely Planet gives Asheville nod despite state's LGBT law

Lonely Planet has shined its light on Asheville, N.C., as its top U.S. destination for 2017, despite a state law limiting LGBT rights that has led companies, entertainers and others to boycott the state. Lonely Planet gave Asheville the No. 1 slot on its "Best of U.S." list because the city "has always been an open, welcoming place, and continues to be after the legislation." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Boy Scouts to relocate national museum

From merit badges and uniforms to an impressive collection of Norman Rockwell paintings and drawings, the Boy Scouts of America will be packing up more than a century of scouting history and taking it to the wilds of northern New Mexico. The organization will move its national museum from its current home in Texas to the Philmont Scout Ranch. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

metro SPORTS

The NHL plans to stick with the name and logo of the Vegas Golden Knights after U.S. patent authorities denied the club's trademark request

Canucks' Skille on show as they strike down Bolts

NHL

Megna also hits double in win but Miller picks up injury

Ryan Miller gave the Vancouver Canucks a late scare in a one-sided win over Tampa Bay.

Miller made 38 saves before leaving with six minutes left in the third period with a lower-body injury.

Jayson Megna and Jack Skille both had two goals and the Canucks beat the Lightning 5-1 on Thursday night.

"He felt sore, he kind of twisted it when he was on the ice," Vancouver coach Willie Desjardins said of Miller.

"He just didn't feel quite right, so we just took him out for precaution. I don't think it's anything (serious)."

Miller skated to the bench and then went to the locker room, and was replaced by Jacob Markstrom, who stopped two shots. Erik Gudbranson also scored for the Canucks, who are 1-1 on a five-game road trip.

Tampa Bay, in a 1-5-1 slide, got a goal from Jonathan Drouin. Nikita Kucherov, Alex Killorn and Jason Garrison all were minus-4.

"First of all, I don't remember losing games by four goals, maybe one a year," Lightning coach Jon Cooper said. "We're losing them about once a week now. It comes down to defending." Tampa Bay has lost by four or more goals four times this season.

Megna had a redirection goal early in the second and then put the Canucks up 4-1 during a 2-on-1 with 1 second left in the period. The forward, who had 25 family and friends in attendance, entered with one goal in 10 games this season, and seven over 64 career games.

"I'm sure they're pretty excited," Megna said. "It's definitely a cool experience to get to play in front of so many people. It's a pretty special night." After Skille opened the scoring 3:50 into the game on his first goal in 24 games, Gudbranson stopped a 34-game goal drought to make it 2-0 at 9:03.

Gudbranson's shot from the slot went off the end boards and ended up in the crease where Tampa Bay goalie Ben Bishop knocked the puck into the net with his glove.

"Obviously, the second one's a lucky one and then we really went down," Cooper said.

It was just eighth time the Canucks have scored first and sixth time Vancouver has been ahead after the first period in 27 games this season.

Bishop was pulled after allowing four goals on 20 shots through two periods.

Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped nine of the 10 shots he faced in the third, giving up Skille's second of the game with 6:02 remaining.

Miller made several strong saves, including a post-to-post stop on Brian Boyle during a Tampa Bay power play in the third. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

THURSDAY in Tampa

5	1
CANUCKS	LIGHTNING

Canucks defenseman Troy Stecher, right, and Tampa Bay Lightning center Cedric Paquette chase a loose puck on Thursday, Dec. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/ CHRIS O'MEARA

MLS FINAL

Sounders and TFC gear up for big one

The two MLS Cup coaches talked up their fervent fan bases Thursday, with Seattle's Brian Schmetzer pointing out on-field similarities between the two rivals.

"They obviously have their big three (designated players), but they're more than just the big three," Schmetzer said of Toronto FC. "If you look at that team, (defender) Drew Moor's inclusion, (midfielder) Will Johnson, some of those types of players have helped them in key moments."

Schmetzer said when people look at the Sounders' turnaround since late July, they focus on the mid-season arrival of Uruguayan attacking midfielder Nicolas Lodeiro and Panamanian defender Roman Torres' return from injury.

"It's not just them. It's Ozzie (Alonso), it's Brad (Evans), it's Zach Scott, it's Chad Marshall. There's a lot of guys there," he added. "So I think the compliment I could give to (Toronto head coach) Greg (Vanney) and (assistant coach) Robin (Fraser) would be that they're a team, and that's why I think this matchup is a good one, on many different layers because we're a team as well.

Toronto practised first on a cold windy day at the team's training centre in the city's north end. Seattle followed in the afternoon and there was an immediate run by players on gloves and other cold weather gear.

The forecast for kickoff Saturday night is -4 C, but feeling like -10, with a 10 per cent chance of precipitation. A sellout crowd of 36,000 is expected at BMO Field.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

SWIMMING

Oleksiak beats her own 100m record

Olympic star Penny Oleksiak won bronze in the 100-metre freestyle at the world short course swimming championships Thursday in Windsor, Ont.

The 16-year-old from Toronto finished in third in 52.01 seconds, lowering her own Canadian record for the third time at the meet. Oleksiak, who won gold in the event at last summer's Olympics, broke her Canadian record in Wednesday's heats and semifinals.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Penny Oleksiak
FRANK GUNN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Griffin III back for Browns

RG3's getting his second shot with the Browns.

Robert Griffin III, who hasn't played since injuring his shoulder in the Sept. 11 season opener at Philadelphia, will start Sunday against the Cincinnati Bengals as the winless Browns (0-12) try to avoid becoming the second team in NFL history to go 0-16. Griffin hasn't played since breaking a bone in his left shoulder in a loss to the Eagles nearly three months ago. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HOCKEY

NHL leaning away from Olympics return

The NHL still has yet to decide whether it will take part in the 2018 Olympics, but the owners don't seem keen on it.

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman said there was "strong negative sentiment" among owners toward players attending a sixth consecutive Olympic Games in Pyeong-Chang. While no formal vote was taken on the first day of the board of governors meetings on Thursday afternoon, feedback leaned against another Olympic experience for the NHL, which has attended every four years since 1998.

"I think after doing five of these, I don't know, fatigue might be a word (to describe it)," Bettman said of the owners' reaction.

"I think our constituents have become increasingly negative toward the Olympic experience," deputy commissioner Bill Daly added. "I think that's fair to say."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Jozy Altidore, left, and Sebastian Giovinco in training
THE CANADIAN PRESS

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MAKE IT TONIGHT

Zesty Lemon Orzo Soup

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

This zingy recipe yields a lot of soup, which is good news since it tastes even better the next day.

Ready in 30 minutes
Prep time: 5
Cook time: 25
Serves 6

Ingredients
- 8 cups low-sodium chicken stock
- 1 cup orzo
- 1/2 lb of skinless, bonelesschicken breast, chopped into bite-sized pieces
- 3 eggs
- 1/3 cup of lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Small handful of parsley, chopped

Directions

1. In large pot, bring stock to a boil. Add the orzo and reduce heat just slightly so it simmers 10 minutes.

2. Now add the chicken to the pot with the stock and orzo and simmer for 10 more minutes.

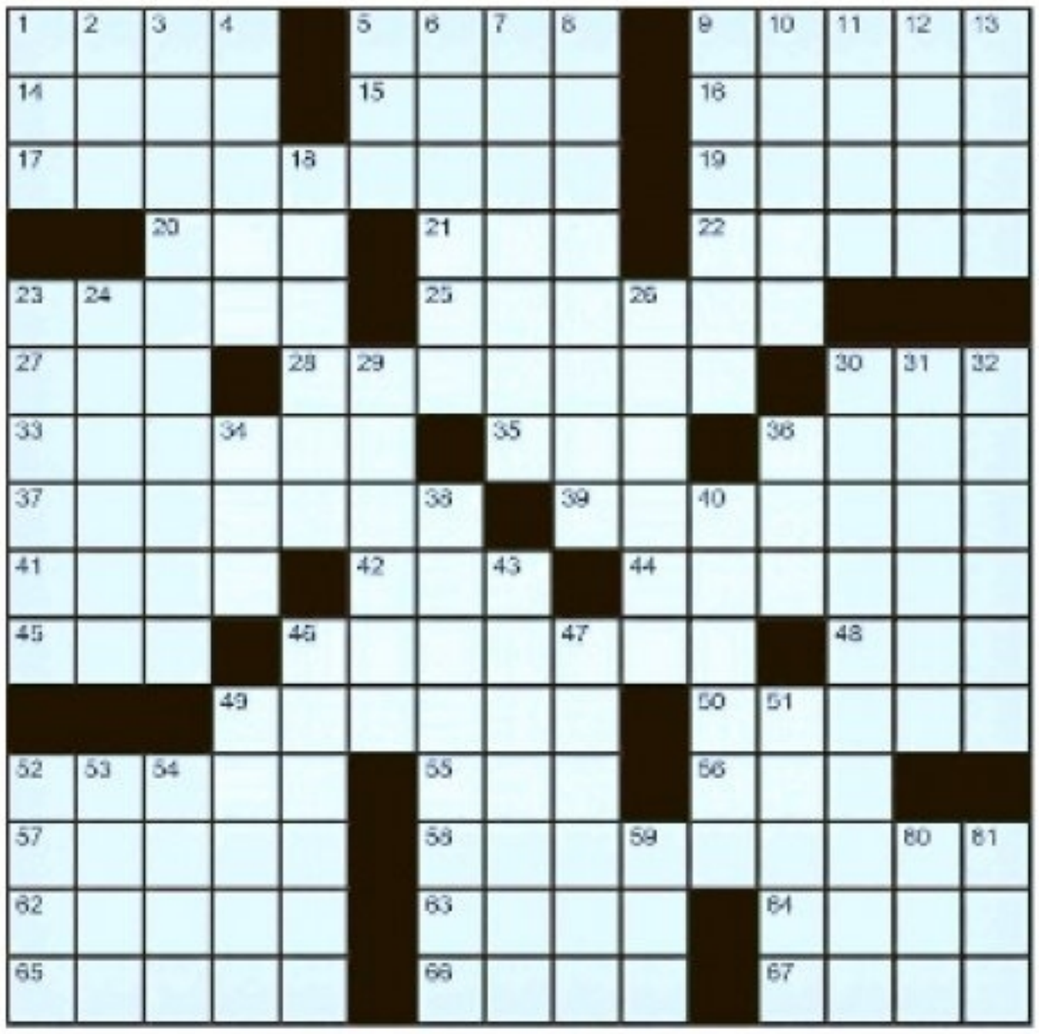
3. While that's cooking away, crack your eggs into a bowl and whisk in the lemon juice. Using a ladle, scoop out some hot broth and add small of stream to your egg mixture while whisking. Add as much hot stock as it takes to really warm up the egg so it won't scramble in the soup.

4. Now pour your egg mixture into your soup pot. Cook for another 2 or 3 minutes or until it thickens slightly. Season to taste. Serve with a sprinkle of chopped parsley.

FOR MORE MEAL IDEAS, VISIT SWEETPOTATOCHRONICLES.COM

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Davy Crockett portrayer Mr. Parker
5. Fashion
9. 'Speak' like Shakespeare
14. Italian harp
15. Singleton
16. __ album
17. Flexibility
19. James Bond portrayer Mr. Moore
20. "__ thousand times."
21. US lawyers' org.
22. A-List
23. Exasperated expletives!
25. "Pretty good!": 2 wds.
27. Ms. Gardner who was married to Frank Sinatra
28. __ salt
30. "Come again?"
33. Empty-__ (Parent whose kids have flown the coop)
35. Theological sch.
36. Window piece
37. Debit card service in Canada
39. Island of Indonesia
41. Put a lawyer to work
42. Bathroom water source
44. Many call it football
45. Feminine pronoun
46. Obtained, as consumer goods
48. Fedora, for one
49. CBC's "Rick __ Report"
50. Canadian painter Ms. Carr
52. Prank
55. __, or Ardor: A Family Chronicle (1969 Vladimir Nabokov novel)
56. "Shiny Happy People" r.o.c.k.e.r.s.
57. Was inclined, like Pisa the Tower
58. "Today" on NBC co-anchor Ms. Guthrie, and namesakes
62. Venetian traveller Mr. Polo
63. Salt Lake City's state
64. High-fiving sound
65. Ranch animal
66. Filming venues
67. Greyish

DOWN
1. Flight watchdog org.
2. Energy unit
3. Toronto-based toymaker of the flying-off-the-shelves toys at #30-Down: 2 wds.
4. Beauty parlor
5. Pre-Tue. day
6. "__ Only" by Adele
7. Coureurs __ (Canoe-travelling fur traders of the woods in New France)
8. Substitutes
9. Banquet
10. Get __ of (Contact)
11. Boo Boo's cartoon pal
12. Leave in, in proofreading
13. Ripped
18. 1963 hit for The Essex: "__ Said Than Done"
23. Particular pastry
24. Toronto thoroughfare, __ Road
26. Confuse
29. Public speaker
30. The must-have toys of Christmas 2016
31. Fanciful
32. Robust
34. Mr. Danson of "Cheers"
36. BC's li'l ocean
38. Mountain chain in Eurasia
40. "__ Family" (ABC comedy)
43. Antecede
46. Sphere
47. Dapper piece of neckwear
49. Festive fare, __ pies
51. Smart people's gr.
52. Donations
53. Shipshape
54. Weight allowance
59. Sneeze-starting sounds...
60. "Very funny."
61. Undercover agent

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
This is the perfect day to make travel plans, because you are excited and enthusiastic. Don't hesitate to explore opportunities in publishing, the media, medicine and the law.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
This is an excellent day for discussions about shared property, inheritances and how to deal with taxes and debt. You might end up laughing all the way to the bank.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Relations with partners and close friends are friendly and upbeat today. This is a wonderful day to enjoy the company of others. Get out and schmooze!

Cancer June 22 - July 23
You want to do your very best on the job today because you are positive-minded and happy about your work. Work-related travel also is likely.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
This is a great day to meet others for a fun, social occasion. Enjoy the arts, sports events, playful activities with children and romantic liaisons.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Family discussions will go well today. This is a particularly good day to discuss real estate negotiations or how to share or divide something with a family member.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Writers and salespeople will be successful today, because it's easy for Librans to be positive-minded. And we all know about the power of positive thinking!

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Business and commerce are favored today. Look for ways to expand your earnings. You also might see ways to make money on the side or even get a better job.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
You're happy today. That's because your ruler, Jupiter, is dancing beautifully with the Sun in your sign. Yes, it doesn't get much better than this!

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
It's easy to feel content in life today because you are quietly happy. You feel confident; furthermore, you feel positive about your future. (And you should.)

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
This is a popular day for Aquarians! Enjoy hanging out with friends. You also will enjoy all of your exchanges with people in groups, clubs, classes and associations.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Because you make a fabulous impression on others today, go after what you want. Now is the day to put forth your agenda with bosses and parents.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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			7		5			
	5	8				2	3	
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				4				
6	9						2	7
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			6		1			
			3		8			

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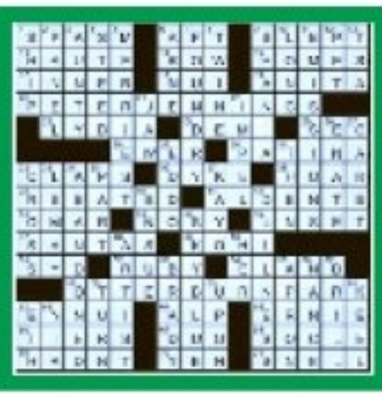

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5	2	8	1	6	4	9	3	7
4	9	1	2	7	3	8	5	6
8	6	3	5	9	1	7	4	2
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